

13

Instruction in the Kingdom

Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old (Matt. 13:52).

The Word of the Kingdom — the message surrounding the kingdom of the heavens (Matt. 13:11, 19, 24) — is *the central message of the New Testament*. Whether studying the gospels, the Book of Acts, the epistles, or the Book of Revelation, an individual will be studying Scriptures dealing *centrally with a message pertaining to the kingdom*.

The person understanding this message will possess a proper foundation to build upon as he studies different parts of the New Testament. However, if this message is not understood, the converse of the preceding will be true. That person will possess an improper foundation to build upon; and his studies throughout any part of the New Testament will, accordingly, be adversely affected.

This is why an individual instructed in the Word of the Kingdom can be likened to the householder in the text. Not only will he be able to go to the Scriptures and bring forth *things which are “old”* (things he has already seen and understood) but he will also be able, from the things which are “old,” to begin seeing and bringing forth *things which are “new”* as well (things he has not previously seen and understood).

And, according to the text, he will be able to do this *because he has been “instructed unto the kingdom of the heavens.”* He now possesses *a key* to the Scriptures, *a key* which will open numerous passages of Scripture to his understanding, passages which otherwise would have remained closed.

Such an individual, as he studies and learns new things about the Word of the Kingdom, will progressively find himself being able to, more and more, take the “old” and see and understand that which is “new.” And the more that person comes into an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom, the more he will see Scripture opening up to him in this fashion. The latter, in this respect, is inseparably linked to and dependent on the former.

This is what an understanding of the Word of the kingdom will do for an individual in his quest for a knowledge of Scripture. And, though this has been the experience and testimony of numerous Christians, this is not simply what they might have to say about the matter. Rather, *this is what the unchangeable Word of God has to say about the matter.*

The Word of God clearly reveals that a person instructed in the Word of the Kingdom can go to the Scriptures and bring forth out of this storehouse of unlimited treasures “things new and old.” But by the same token, apart from an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom, though an individual may be able to see and understand certain truths, the same situation referred to in Matt. 13:52 simply doesn’t exist.

The preceding will explain why this whole realm of teaching lies *center stage* in Satan’s attack against the Word during the present dispensation. An understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is *the key* to a proper understanding of Scripture as it relates to Christians, and Satan knows this. He knows that if he can corrupt or destroy that which will open the door to a proper understanding of the numerous other Scriptures bearing on the subject, he can best accomplish the purpose for his present work among Christians.

Satan’s efforts toward this end are something easily seen in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. These four parables present a chronology of Satan’s work as he seeks to subvert the Word of the Kingdom, and this chronology covers the progressive results of his work in this respect throughout the entire dispensation.

Satan’s attack in the first parable, the parable of the Sower (vv. 3-8, 18-23), was seen to be against *those hearing the Word of the Kingdom*. He sought to stop the matter at that point, preventing individuals from understanding this message and subsequently bringing forth fruit.

Four types of individuals are seen responding to the message, with Satan being successful in his attack against three of the four. Those seen in the first three of the four categories fell away and bore no fruit. But Satan's attack against those in the fourth category proved to be unsuccessful. They heard the Word, received and understood the Word, overcame Satan's attack, and bore fruit.

Then the next parable, the parable of the wheat and tares (vv. 24-30, 36-43), centers around Satan's attack against *the ones bearing fruit from the previous parable*. Satan placed those with a false message (false teachers) in the midst of those bearing fruit, seeking to subvert the message and stop that which was occurring. That is to say, he sought to corrupt the true message through introducing a false message. And this was done with a view to stopping that which had resulted from a proclamation of the true message. This was done with a view to stopping those Christians who were bearing fruit from doing so.

Then the next parable, the parable of the mustard seed (vv. 31, 32), shows that *which happened in Christendom over the course of time during the dispensation because of this false message*. The mustard seed germinated and took a normal growth for awhile. But then something happened, which caused it to take an abnormal growth and eventually become *a tree*. And after this abnormal growth had occurred — after the mustard bush had become a tree, something which it wasn't supposed to become at all — the birds of the air (ministers of Satan, seen in the first parable [v. 4]) found a lodging place therein.

And the fourth parable, the parable of the leaven (v. 33), *completes the picture*. The false message introduced near the beginning of the dispensation is likened to leaven placed in three measures of meal ("three" is the number of *Divine perfection*, and "meal" is that which is used to make *bread*. Leaven [a corrupting substance] was placed in the meal [resulting in corruption in the bread]). And this leaven would continue to work (this false message would continue to permeate and corrupt the true message) until *the whole* had been leavened (until *the whole* had been corrupted).

This is the revealed direction which Christendom would take relative to the true message concerning the Word of the Kingdom following the introduction of the leaven, following the introduction of a false message concerning the Word of the Kingdom.

These four parables together show a *history of Christendom throughout the dispensation in relation to the Word of the Kingdom*. This message — the central message of the New Testament — was universally taught throughout the Churches during the first century. But the introduction of a false message resulted in changes. Christendom itself took an abnormal growth; and this abnormal growth was such that the false teachers eventually found themselves welcomed within that which they, through their false message, had corrupted.

Corruption though didn't stop at this point. The working of the leaven continued, and it would continue until this false message had permeated all of Christendom. This corrupting process would continue, according to the text, "till the whole" *had been leavened*.

And, viewing the matter solely from the standpoint of that which can be seen in the world today, what has been the end result of the working of the leaven? As the dispensation draws to a close, where does the Church find itself today?

The answers are easy to ascertain. All one has to do in order to see and understand that which has happened is to go into almost any Church of the land (fundamental and liberal alike) and listen for any mention of things having to do with the Word of the Kingdom. *A person will listen in vain*. Because of the working of a leavening process which is in its final stages, the true Biblical message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom is practically nonexistent throughout Christendom today.

This leavening process recognizes no bounds or barriers. Fundamental Christendom finds itself just as permeated with the leaven, as it relates to the Word of the Kingdom, as does liberal Christendom. From the theology schools to the pulpits of Churches to the pews in these Churches, the whole of Christendom finds itself *in exactly the same state* insofar as that revealed throughout the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen is concerned.

Many of the fundamentalists, not understanding the true nature of the leavening process, look upon themselves as having escaped this corruption. But such is not the case at all. Insofar as any understanding and proclamation of the Word of the Kingdom is concerned, the fundamental groups find themselves *in exactly the same state* as the liberal groups. They find themselves *permeated through and through*

with exactly the same corrupting leaven. There is absolutely no difference between the two groups in this respect. Neither understands nor proclaims this message.

Seminaries—fundamental and liberal alike—are training students in everything but the one message which will open the Scriptures to their understanding. And these same seminaries are turning out graduates who are filling the pulpits of Churches with a message completely void of any reference to the Word of the Kingdom. These seminary graduates don't know the truth of the matter, and, as a result, *their entire ministries* are negatively affected. The various flocks which the Lord has entrusted to their care are not being properly fed; and, in reality, for the most part, *Christians under their ministries are slowly starving to death.*

Christians throughout the Churches today are simply not hearing the one message, above all other messages, which they should be hearing. And the reason is given in the first four parables of Matthew chapter thirteen. The working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time has produced a corruption extending throughout Christendom which has all but destroyed the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom. And, as a result of this corruption, the Bible, for the most part, remains *a closed book for the vast majority of Christians.*

The preceding is why a person, untrained in the theology schools of the land, but understanding the Word of the Kingdom, often has a better grasp of the whole of Scripture than many of those who are teaching in the theology schools. The person having an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom possesses *a key* to Scripture which a person without this understanding does not possess. *He can go to the Scriptures and bring forth things both "new and old";* but the same thing cannot be said for those who lack this understanding.

Why?

Why will instruction in the Word of the Kingdom open the Scriptures to a person's understanding like nothing else? Why is an understanding of this message so vital if a person is to possess a correct and proper grasp of Scripture? The answer could be looked upon in a twofold respect.

First, an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is the only thing which will provide the true Biblical picture surrounding *the purpose* for the Christian life. Why did God bring *the new creation* “in Christ” into existence? Why is God taking an entire dispensation to do a work among the Gentiles? Why is the Holy Spirit presently in the world performing *a work among Christians*?

And *second*, an understanding of the Word of the Kingdom is the only thing which will provide the true Biblical picture surrounding *direction* for the Christian life. What is the goal toward which everything moves as it pertains to *the new creation* “in Christ”? What is the spiritual warfare about? What is the race of the faith about? What will be the end result of victory or defeat as it pertains to the warfare or the race?

An understanding of the Word of the Kingdom will answer questions surrounding the Christian life *unlike anything else in the Word of God*. This is *the only thing* which will present the complete Biblical picture in its correct fashion. *Only out of this teaching* can all the issues surrounding the Christian life be properly addressed, and *only out of this teaching* can one find the true motivation for Godly Christian living.

But, if all the preceding is true — and it is — then why is this message so fought against in Christian circles today? It would appear that *acceptance* rather than rejection would be the norm.

Such though is not the case at all. Rather, with rare exceptions, *rejection* is invariably the norm. And the reason is seen in the working of the leaven in Matt. 13:33. The negative attitude of Christians toward the Word of the Kingdom is simply the end result of a work of Satan which has been going on for almost 2,000 years.

1) Purpose of...

The overall picture of the Word of the Kingdom in the New Testament begins with the offer of the kingdom of the heavens to Israel in the gospel accounts. Israel spurned this offer, the offer was taken from Israel, and an entirely new entity was then brought into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected (Matt. 21:33-43; I Peter 2:9-11).

The one new man, the new creation “in Christ” (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:15) was brought into existence to bring forth fruit where Israel had failed.

And, since Israel had spurned the offer, God, in relation to this *one new man*, turned to the Gentiles. God set aside an entire dispensation, lasting two days, 2,000 years, during which time He would perform and complete a work with *an entirely new creation*. And this would be accomplished through removing “a people for his name” from among the Gentiles, though with “a remnant according to the election of grace [believing Jews]” being included (Acts 15:14; Rom. 11:5).

And, in order to carry out His purposes surrounding this *new creation*, God sent the Holy Spirit into the world. Throughout the present dispensation, the Spirit of God is in the world performing a work in the antitype of that seen in Genesis chapter twenty-four.

As Abraham in this chapter sent his servant into the far country *to procure a bride for his son*, God has sent the Holy Spirit into the world *to procure a bride for His Son*. And, as in the type, so in the antitype — the search occurs *among those in the family*. The Spirit of God is conducting His search *among those comprising the one new man*, for this *one new man* forms the body of Christ, and the bride is to be taken *from the body* (cf. Gen. 2:21-25; 24:2-4, 9; Matt. 22:14).

And also as in the type, once the search has been completed, the bride will be removed. As Rebekah was removed from Mesopotamia, so will Christ’s bride be removed from the earth; as Isaac came forth to meet Rebekah, so will the Son come forth to meet His bride; and as Rebekah went with Isaac to his home, where *she became his wife*, so will the bride go with Christ to His home, where *she will become His wife* (Gen. 24:61-67; I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 19:7-9).

2) Direction for...

The goal toward which everything pertaining to *the new creation* “in Christ” moves is exactly the same as the goal set forth in the beginning, in the opening two chapters of Genesis. The point out ahead toward which all things move is *the earth’s coming Sabbath, foreshadowed by the Sabbath in Gen. 2:1-3, which followed six days of restorative work (Gen. 1:2b-25)*.

And it matters not whether one is viewing the reason for the existence of the one new man, the reason for the present dispensation, or the reason for the Spirit of God having been sent into the world, the point toward which everything moves is *always the same*. It has to be

the same, for this is the way matters were set forth and established at the beginning of God's revelation to man (Gen. 1:1-2:3).

And properly understanding the spiritual warfare and the present race of the faith is contingent on properly understanding things surrounding the goal which lies out ahead. It is contingent on properly understanding the reason God has brought *the one new man* into existence, the reason God has set aside an entire dispensation to deal with this *new man*, and the reason God has sent His Spirit into the world to perform a work during the dispensation.

Christians are engaged in a warfare against powerful spirit beings in the heavens, which is part and parcel with the race of the faith in which they find themselves engaged; and whether Christians do or do not understand all the various things about this warfare and race, Satan knows every one of these things all too well. And he is ever lying in wait to defeat the Christian in the warfare or sidetrack him in the race.

And the end result will be either *victory or defeat*. An individual will either *overcome* in the warfare and race or he will *be overcome*.

And note what is at stake in either victory or defeat — *the greatest thing God could ever design for redeemed man*. The Spirit of God is presently in the world opening the Word of God to the Christians' understanding, calling their attention to one central fact — *They are being offered positions as co-regents with Christ in His kingdom, forming the bride which will reign with the Son as consort queen*.

That's what is at stake. And knowing this, is it any wonder that Satan, very early in the dispensation, set about to accomplish the things outlined in the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen? Is it any wonder that he has done and continues to do everything within his power to corrupt and destroy the true message surrounding Christians and the coming kingdom?

From Genesis to Matthew to Revelation

As previously seen in this book, several things must be kept in mind when studying the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. The first four were given outside the house, by the seaside; and the last three were given after Christ had reentered the house. This fact, often

overlooked, is significant beyond degree if one is to understand these parables correctly. Then, a chronology is seen in the parables which carries the reader from the beginning of the present dispensation to the future Messianic Kingdom.

As previously shown, the first four parables (given outside the house, by the seaside) present a history of Christendom as it relates to the Word of the Kingdom; and this history covers the entirety of the dispensation. To understand why conditions in Christendom are as they presently exist, one has to go back in history and follow the course of events leading into the presently existing situation.

And going back in history after this fashion can only be done *one way*. It can *only* involve going to the Scriptures to see what the Word of God reveals about the matter, not what the various Church history books written by man reveal. All of man's writings on Church history might as well be categorized as "secular" insofar as this aspect of Church history is concerned. That which man has written simply doesn't deal with Church history in this respect, *though this is the main crux of the matter seen within the way Scripture deals with the subject*.

The earliest period of Church history is dealt with in the Book of Acts, following the inception of the Church. This period covers that time when the kingdom was being reoffered to Israel (from 33 to 62 A.D.). And, accordingly, the message seen throughout this book centers around *the proffered kingdom*.

The epistles (some written during the Acts period, some following) deal centrally with the same message seen in Acts — *one having to do with the kingdom*. These epistles simply form *different facets of instructions written to Christians surrounding the same central message*. And these epistles, as the Book of Acts, provide information surrounding early Church history.

Both the Book of Acts and the epistles deal with the Church during the first century only. But there are two places in Scripture which deal with a history of the Church throughout the dispensation. One is in the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen, before the Church was even brought into existence; and the other is in Revelation chapters two and three, at a place in the book where the Church is seen being dealt with at the judgment seat in the heavens following the dispensation (though the record itself was given during the early years of the

dispensation and has to do with a history of the Church during the dispensation as well). Thus, one complete history is seen in Scripture at a point *preceding* the dispensation (Matt. 13), and the other is seen in Scripture at a point *following* the dispensation (Rev. 2, 3).

In Matthew chapter thirteen, before the dispensation began, a history of the Church — in relation to the Word of the Kingdom — is seen in the first four parables. And, in Revelation chapters two and three, at a point in the book which follows the dispensation, a history of the Church — in relation to the Word of the Kingdom — is seen in the seven letters (seven epistles) to the seven Churches.

The first presents a history of the Church in relation to the Word of the Kingdom from the perspective of the Lord using parables; the second presents a history of the Church in relation to the Word of the Kingdom from the perspective of the Lord using epistles to seven existing Churches in Asia. But both show *exactly the same thing*. The Church is revealed to have begun one way (a mustard bush, an entity laboring for Christ's sake [Matt. 13:32; Rev. 2:2, 3]), but the Church is seen ending another way (a tree, a completely leavened entity, one neither cold nor hot, one described as "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" [Matt. 13:32, 33; Rev. 3:15-17]).

Then, all of this is intimately connected with God's original structure of His Word at the beginning. The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen and the seven epistles in Revelation chapters two and three are structured after a fashion which is in complete keeping with the way God set matters forth at the very beginning of His revelation to man, in the opening chapters of Genesis. And this is easy to understand, for the latter rests upon and is inseparably linked to the former.

Scripture begins with a foundational framework upon which the whole of subsequent Scripture rests — six days of restorative work (a restoration of the ruined material creation, with man created at the conclusion of this work, on the sixth day), followed by a seventh day of rest, a Sabbath day. And the preceding relates the story of the whole of Scripture beyond this introductory framework.

Man, following his creation, fell. And he, through this fall, became a ruined creation, bringing about not only his own ruin but the ruin of the restored material creation once again as well. And God, following this ruin, again set about to perform six days of restorative work —

which this time had to do with both man and the material creation. And this latter restorative work will be followed by a seventh day of rest — a Sabbath rest awaiting the people of God, the coming Messianic Era (Heb. 4:4-9) — in exact keeping with the pattern set forth at the beginning.

Each day in the former restoration was twenty-four hours in length, including the Sabbath; and each day in the latter restoration has been / will be 1,000 years in length, including the Sabbath (*cf.* Matt. 16:28-17:5; II Peter 1:16-18; 3:1-8).

All of Scripture beyond the foundational framework in the opening two chapters of Genesis rests upon and forms additional information for this framework. And it matters not whether one is dealing with the framework set forth at the beginning or with subsequent Scripture, all restorative work can be seen moving toward *the same goal* — *a coming Sabbath of rest*.

(Note also that exactly the same septenary structure beginning the Old Testament in the opening two chapters is seen in the opening two chapters of John's gospel as well [which, in this respect, should be the gospel beginning the New Testament, paralleling Genesis beginning the Old].

As well, with respect to everything moving toward the seventh day, the subject matter is the same throughout both books. In Genesis, this is accomplished mainly through the use of *types*; and in John, this is accomplished mainly through the use of *signs*.

The former [Genesis] has to do with the restoration of a ruined material creation, occurring over six days time, with a seventh day following [a day of rest following]; the latter [John's gospel] has to do with the restoration of another ruined creation, ruined man, occurring over six days time, with a seventh day following [a day of rest following].

Thus, if John's gospel occupied its proper place in the Canon of Scripture — set at the beginning of the four gospels — each Testament would be introduced by this septenary structure.)

Then, with the preceding in mind, note the first four parables in Matthew chapter thirteen. Events in these parables form one facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath, which covers the entire present dispensation.

And, viewing events in the remaining three parables, which move beyond the present dispensation and progress on into the Messianic Era, it's easy to see and understand how all these parables move toward this same goal — the same goal set forth at the beginning of Scripture, the coming Sabbath. *Everything moves toward this goal.*

And exactly the same thing can be seen in the seven epistles to the seven Churches in Revelation chapters two and three. This sequence of epistles simply forms another facet of a commentary on that which occurs during the two days immediately preceding the Sabbath. And, from the overcomer's promises, along with that which is revealed in Revelation chapters one and four, it's easy to see and understand that all of this (exactly as the parables in Matthew chapter thirteen) has to do with the Church in relation to the Word of the Kingdom and the coming Sabbath. *Again, everything moves toward this goal.*

Thus, it should be a simple matter to see that anything in the New Testament which has to do with *the Church* centers around things having to do with *the coming kingdom*. And though man may write his history books *completely separate from this message*, Scripture centers its revealed history of the Church *completely around this message*.

During the first century, Christians would have understood a history of the Church in keeping with Scripture, for the Word of the Kingdom was universally taught throughout the Churches of the land. Today though, the situation has become completely reversed. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the message surrounding the Word of the Kingdom has become so corrupted that two things would be evident:

First, a Church historian wouldn't know enough about the Word of the Kingdom to even include it within his account in the first place, much less ascribe to this message a central place in his account.

Second, even should a Church historian write about the matter, Christians wouldn't be able to understand that which he was writing about. Because of the working of the leaven over almost two millenniums of time, the truth about the Word of the Kingdom has become so corrupted that it would be completely alien to their way of thinking.

And that's where we are in a supposedly enlightened twentieth century Christendom, immediately preceding Christ's return for the Church. We're living during a time when there is far more material available for Bible study and research than has ever existed in the history of the Church — everything from the extensive computer study and research programs to new books being printed every day. But we are also living during a time when *the birds of the air are freely lodging in the branches of the tree, with its roots sunk deep into the earth, where the heaven has almost completed its work.*

Warning

The parables in Matthew chapter thirteen deal far more extensively with *the negative* than they do with the positive. More space is given in the first parable to those who fail to bring forth fruit than is given to those who do bring forth fruit (in three of the four parts). And the emphasis in the second, third, fourth, and seventh parables is on different facets of this same work of Satan as well. Only the fifth and sixth parables, which have to do with Christ's redemptive work as it relates to the earth and to His bride, form an exception.

Thus, the central thrust of these parables is seen to be *far more negative than positive*. These parables have to do centrally with exposing the work of Satan throughout the dispensation in relation to the Word of the Kingdom, along with revealing where this will lead, both during and following the dispensation.

As the dispensation draws to a close and Satan's corrupting work nears its final stage, the whole matter goes almost completely unrecognized in Christendom. And the reason for this is easy to see and understand. The leavened state of Christendom is being viewed by those who have themselves been adversely affected by the leaven.

They are, in this respect, as the two disciples on the Emmaus road who were walking alongside the resurrected Christ and didn't even recognize Him. Their inability to recognize the Christ of the Old Testament Scriptures — the Word which had become flesh, the Old Testament Scriptures which had been manifested in a Person — resulted from their inability to properly understand these same Scriptures. It was only after these Scriptures had been opened to their understand-

ing, followed by Christ breaking bread, that their eyes were opened.

And Christians today, viewing a leavened Christendom and not seeing or understanding its true condition, are simply not viewing matters from a correct Biblical perspective. Their inability to recognize the true condition of the Church stems from their inability to understand that which Scripture reveals about the matter. And, if their eyes are to be opened to the truth of the existing situation, such will occur only through the truth of the Word being presented to them and being accepted by them.

But will such occur during the present dispensation? Will the truth about the coming kingdom ever be proclaimed in such a manner that it will be accepted, allowing the eyes of Christians to be opened?

One here and one there will hear and understand the message, but not the Church at large. Conditions can only *continue to deteriorate* in the latter respect. Such was assured — the pattern was set — when the woman placed the leaven in the three measures of meal. *And conditions can only continue to deteriorate, until the whole has been leavened.*