

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Message Six

**The Appearance of the Kingdom—
the Outward Condition of the Kingdom**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 13:24-30, 31-32, 33-35, 36-43; 5:3; Acts 20:29-30; Gal. 2:4-5; Phil. 3:2; 1 John 2:18-19; Rev. 18:2; 21:9-11; 1 Cor. 5:7-8; Luke 12:1; Matt. 16:6; Mark 8:15; Exo. 13:7

I. The appearance of the kingdom of the heavens is the outward condition of the kingdom; the parables of the tares, the great tree, and the woman who put the leaven reveal the false constituents, the abnormal development, and the inward corruption of the kingdom of the heavens—cf. Matt. 13.

II. The parable of the tares reveals the establishment of the kingdom and its false constituents—Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43:

- A. The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, and the tares, the false believers, are the sons of the evil one—Matt. 13:37-38.
- B. The kingdom of the heavens was established with the sons of the kingdom, the wheat, but the sons of the evil one, the tares, grew up to alter the situation—Matt. 13:38.
- C. Throughout the New Testament we see the growth and development of the tares—Acts 20:29-30; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Gal. 2:4-5; Phil. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:14-15; Heb. 12:15; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18-19; 2 John 7; Jude 4, 8-16; Rev. 2:2b.
- D. In the eyes of God, the tares are exceedingly evil; the judgment upon the tares will be very serious because they have been confusing, frustrating, and damaging God's economy—Matt. 13:30, 40-42.
- E. Satan sowed tares among the wheat to frustrate the life of the wheat from growing—Matt. 13:25-30:
 1. The tares were sown by the enemy to frustrate the proper growth of the divine life in the believers (the wheat).
 2. Although the growth of life of the wheat has been greatly frustrated by the tares, the wheat still grows with the divine life and produces the grain which is ground into fine flour to make a loaf for an offering to God for His enjoyment and satisfaction—Matt. 13:33; 1 Cor. 10:16-17.

III. The parable of the mustard seed growing into a great tree speaks of the abnormal development of the outward appearance of the kingdom of the heavens—Matt. 13:31-32:

- A. Satan is very subtle in changing the principle of life to make the mustard seed grow not according to its kind; according to the law of God's creation, every plant must be according to its kind—Matt. 13:32; Gen. 1:11-12.
 1. The mustard seed should become an herb to produce proper food for people, but Satan made it a tree to become a lodging place for so many birds (evil persons, spirits, and things)—Matt. 13:32.
 2. Because the nature of the mustard seed was changed, it is no longer an herb to feed people but a tree to lodge birds; this great tree is today's Christendom—cf. Dan. 4:4-26.
- B. The parable of the mustard seed corresponds to the third of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3—the church in Pergamos, which signifies the church in union with the world and becoming monstrously great—Rev. 2:12-17:
 1. The church, according to its heavenly and spiritual nature, should be like the mustard herb, an annual herb, sojourning on the earth—Matt. 13:31-32.

2. However, with its nature changed, the church became deeply rooted and settled in the earth as a perennial tree, flourishing with its enterprises as the branches to lodge many evil persons and things.
- C. The great tree in Matthew 13 will be fully developed into Babylon the Great, which is full of leaven, pollution, corruption, and all kinds of evil things; the reality of the kingdom of the heavens will consummate with a city—the New Jerusalem; the appearance of the kingdom of the heavens will also consummate with a city—Babylon the Great—Rev. 18:2; 21:9-11.

IV. The parable of the woman who put leaven into the three measures of meal portrays the inward corruption of the outward appearance of the kingdom of the heavens—Matt. 13:33-35:

- A. The church, as the practical kingdom of the heavens, with Christ, the unleavened fine flour, as its content, must be a loaf of unleavened bread—1 Cor. 5:7-8.
- B. “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy”; the teaching of the Pharisees was hypocritical—Luke 12:1b.
- C. “Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees” (Matt. 16:6); both the teaching of the Pharisees and the teaching of the Sadducees were impure and evil and were likened to leaven, which was not to be seen among God’s people—Exo. 13:7.
- D. “Beware of...the leaven of Herod”; the leaven of Herod was his corruption and injustice in politics—Mark 8:15; cf. Rev. 17:1-2.

V. We need to enjoy Christ as our unleavened banquet, the reality of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for the entire period of our Christian life—1 Cor. 5:7-8; Exo. 12:15-20:

- A. This is a long feast, which we must keep not with the sin of our old nature, the old leaven, but with unleavened bread, which is the Christ of our new nature as our nourishment and enjoyment.
- B. If we live with Christ as our Substitute, have a new beginning of life, and deal with all exposed sin, the leaven in our lives, we will have a daily living that is worthy of being a memorial—Exo. 13:4-9.