

SEVENTH DAY  BAPTIST®

***This Week in the Word***

*Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Ps 119:89.*



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***Parables of God's Kingdom***

**Study Scripture: Matthew 13:24-30**

**Lesson 2, June 9th, 2018.**

**Key Verse**

*Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*

*Matthew 13: 30*

**INTRODUCTION**

We will now look at the sad truth that sin has altered the internal mental and psychological structure in man and that many will behave in ways which show that they prefer evil rather than good; and prefer being on the broad road that leads to their destruction. Evil is so pervasive and damaging to our understanding and has shut out the light of God in such a complete way that we are faced with a unbelievably startling and mysterious reality.

There came a time in the ministry of Jesus, especially in the region of Galilee where He had performed many mighty miracles and expounded His doctrine; that despite His demonstrated power, authority and His fulfillment of every messianic prophecy, that the hearts of the people toward Him still remained hard and callous as was prophesied (Isa. 6:9-11).

In Matthew 12:24 the Pharisees accused Jesus of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub the prince of devils, thus indicating that the religious leadership of Israel had definitively rejected Him and His teachings.

The many exchanges between Jesus and the religious leadership clearly marked a turning point in Jesus' ministry as far as Matthew was concerned and brings us to our Chapter of study.

Before this Jesus had been speaking clearly about the Kingdom of Heaven and the necessity for repentance. But now it became clear that the leaders and the people were not really paying attention and were not listening and so He would have to speak to them in a new way, a way that would motivate them to open their ears and listen carefully. At the same time His technique would give them a constant warning.

So Jesus began to teach in parables so the deep spiritual truths of the kingdom would be veiled from the unbelieving heart, and they would be thereby rebuked; (John 8:43-47; Isa 29:10-13; 2 Thess 2:10-13). Note His assessment of them:

“Why do you not know My speech? Because you cannot hear My Word. You are of the Devil your father, and the lusts of your father you will do. He was a murderer from the beginning and did not abide in the truth because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God's Words. Therefore you do not hear them because you are not of God.”

Parables however served a dual purpose, for while they concealed the truth from the unbeliever, they were instrumental in equipping the saints, the elect; with a deeper knowledge of the Kingdom. So we read that parables then began to play a central role in the teaching ministry of Jesus. “Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable”, (Matt. 13:34).

In Matt. 13 Jesus began for the first time to speak in parables. Before that Jesus never really spoke in Parables in the sense of speaking in stories in which there was a hidden spiritual message. It was in Parables that He now spoke about the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven.

There were 8 parables in this one Chapter, all dealing with the mystery of the Kingdom, starting from:

- The beginning of the Kingdom, then dealing with
- Satan's counterfeit, then
- The extent of the growth of the Kingdom,
- The secret of the growth of the Kingdom, the value of the Kingdom,
- The need for searching,
- The responsibility involved by those in the Kingdom, and
- Edification that was necessary in the Kingdom.

We can list these parables as

1. The parable of the Sower and the Soils (13:1-9) or the parable of the Lavish Farmer
2. The parable of the Wheat and the Tares or the Mysterious Harvest (13:24-30)
3. The parable of the Mustard Seed or the ambitious Seed(13:31-32)
4. The parable of the Leaven or the Sneaky Householder (13:33)
5. The parable of the Hidden Treasure (13:44)

6. The parable of the Costly Pearl or the Pearl of Great Price(13:45-46)
7. The parable of the Great Dragnet (13:47-50)
8. The parable of the Householder (13:52)

One writer tells in simple form what the Parables mean:

“The first two Parables relate to planting.

The parable of the Sower speaks of different responses to the message of the Kingdom.

The parable of the Tares explain the origins of the conflict between the sons of the Kingdom and the sons of the enemy and announces that a final separation of the two groups will take place when Jesus, the Son of Man, will return at the end of the age.

The second pair of parables utilizes the analogy of growth.

The Mustard Seed reveals the extent of the rapid international growth of the kingdom of God.

The leavening process addresses the internal and invisible dynamic of that growth.

The next two parables (the treasure and the Pearl merchant) address the value of the kingdom.

Whether one is looking or not looking, no sacrifice is too great for the kingdom.

The final set of parables reveals the disciples’ dual responsibilities.

The Dragnet teaches that evangelism without discrimination should be done in view of Jesus’ discriminating judgment at the end of the age.

The householder encourages the teaching of both the older and newer truths of the kingdom of heaven by the disciples of the kingdom”.

It is therefore most prudent for us to pay particular attention to these Parables, devoting time to the diligent study of the deep truths they contain. It is considered by some that the passage we will now study contains “the key to history”, that is, the great principle upon which God determines human events. One writer comments:

“It is not only the principle by which God Judges nations and determines the course of international events, but it is the principle by which he governs what happens to individuals as well.”

Let us not be fooled – parables are not merely earthly stories with heavenly meanings, or principles that simply help one through life.

Before we consider the purpose of parables, let us briefly look at what a parable is.

The modern meaning of a parable (Aristotelian) would be a short fictional story with a double meaning, from which one could deduce certain things.

The Biblical definition is somewhat more complex. The word parable (mashal) : Hebrew, parable : Greek) means to place one thing beside another, it is a similitude or comparison, its language is metaphorical or figurative.

In fact parables can be used to describe the following forms of writing, as long as they are figurative and metaphorical - A proverb such as in (1 Sam. 24:13) a satire or taunt

(Psalm 44:11), a riddle (Psalm 49:4), a figurative saying (Mark 7:14-17), an extended simile (Matt. 13:33), story parable (Matt. 25:1-13) an example parable (Matt. 18:23-25), and even an allegory (Judges 9:7-20; Mark 4:3-9, 13-20), or even one-liners.

Common to all these forms that a parable can take is the literary device of comparison, where known things are compared with unknown things, in order to bring understanding of the latter. More specifically in the parables of Jesus, known or earthly things are compared to unknown heavenly things.

This form of teaching holds deep truths, which are taught by using interesting illustrations and varying amounts of detail. These parables in one sense are simple, but contain deep truths about the kingdom that only the spiritually discerning can truly grasp. We are warned that: “the carnal mind cannot receive the things of the spirit, because they are spiritually discerned”.

Parables maintain anonymity, but are filled with realism. Jesus’ use of first century Palestinian and Semitic characters, familiar settings and many other true to life images bring these stories to life, their imagery etched in the minds of His hearers. Hearers could intimately identify with the nameless characters and they could see themselves portrayed in the roles of these parables.

This kind of teaching elicited very strong reactions. It encouraged listeners to become involved personally in the story, and react. When Nathan told David about the theft of the poor man’s prized lamb, David became enraged. In the Song of the Vineyard, Isaiah invited the listeners to participate in the story.

Jesus’ parables, like those in the Old Testament, were structured to jolt men into seeing things in a new way, to enlighten and persuade them, and bring believers to a deeper understanding of the kingdom. The form of the parable demands attention, insight, and sometimes an actual explanation. One writer says:

“The worth of parables as instruments of teaching lies in their being at once a test of character and in their presenting each form of character with that which, as a penalty or blessing, is adapted to it. They withdraw the light from those who love darkness. They protect the truth which they enshrine from the mockery of the scoffer. They leave something even with the careless which may be interpreted and understood afterwards.

They reveal on the other hand, the seekers after truth. These ask the meaning of the parable, and will not rest until the teacher has explained it. In this way the parable did work, found out the fit hearers and led them on. In most of the parables it is possible to trace something like an order.”

In addition to this, parables give us great insight into the absolute sovereignty of God. From a heavenly perspective we see God’s sovereignty in the election of men to salvation, and from an earthly perspective we see the responsibility of man in responding to God. The implications found in the study on the purpose of parables are far reaching; so it is vital for us to pay extremely close attention and respond accordingly. Turning a deaf ear

having heard the truth, and closing ones eyes having seen the truth; will leave you precariously perched on the edge of hell, where only the grace of God can keep you from falling in.

## BACKGROUND

The ministry of Jesus came at one of the darkest times in human history. The social economic, religious and political institutions were in a state of immense upheaval. Lawlessness and poverty were the order of the day. The Gentile Roman army were the occupying rulers and opposed by certain Jewish religious sects, tension seemed to run at a fever pitch. There were many sects and fringe groups in Israel that have been recognized even though most persons knew only of the Essenes, the Zealots, the radical revolutionary and violent sect, the Pharisees and the Sadducees

The Scribes and Pharisees only added fuel to the fire as they became more and more antagonistic to the idea of Roman rule. These keepers of the 'law' had become so entangled with the political issues of the day and had drifted so far from the truth that they were prevented from seeing and accepting the true Messiah, the one for whom they had long awaited, though they spoke with Him face to face.

In our Scripture Text for today, Jesus was teaching His disciples, but as was now common, a multitude of people followed Him and were also listening as He taught His disciples. In fact the crowd was so large, that Jesus was forced to get in a boat and launch out a little way, in order that the multitude could hear Him.

Note, "Jesus spoke all these things to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable," Mat 13:34. Some commentators interpret this verse to mean that from this moment on, Jesus' teaching ministry consisted of only Parables, others say that it was simply characterized by Parables. While others contend that in this context it refers to this specific day; they point out that there are many instances after this point where Jesus taught without parables.

The Parables where interestingly arranged in pairs; where one would introduce a Kingdom principle and the second would bring further light on that aspect. Jesus did in fact give the interpretations of these parables, which would suggest along with the disciples request for the interpretation (Luke 8:9), that their meaning was not quite as simple or straightforward as it might first appear.

This first parable of the Soils however, was a pivotal one and its understanding or acceptance would mark ones entrance into the Kingdom. Ignorance and rejection of this teaching marked the point at which one would be barred from further Kingdom truth. One would remain in a lost state.

Note carefully now that Jesus began to reveal the course of history and the mysteries involved in the history of the world. Ominously He had begun to teach in parables, because He wanted to give new revelation concerning the Kingdom of God to His disciples and not to the multitudes that had rejected Him. The full truth was about to be presented in

a veiled way. Accordingly we see a Chapter full of parables which amazingly give us the principles which will affect all of human life until the time of Jesus' Second Coming. They are principles which reveal why the world's events are unfolding as they are. Remember the very serious reality that God looks at the history of mankind in a particular way and the parables isolate and highlight for us the meaningful and powerfully effective forces which are at work in all human lives and in all periods of history.

Remember also and think deeply on the fact that Jesus came to reveal the will of the Father and so in that capacity and role He would declare to the Pharisees that He was Lord of the Sabbath, an institution at the very center of Jewish life (12:8). To clarify the mind of God to these erring rulers Jesus then on a Sabbath Day entered a synagogue and healed a man with a withered hand, right in front of the Pharisees who had wanted to accuse Him and malign His work for they argued that it was not lawful to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus' answer and His action in healing the man showed them how God looks at the Sabbath, and gave an indication of what was lawful on the Sabbath. He then withdrew and healed many in the great multitudes that followed Him. When He healed the multitudes He warned them not to make it known that He was there in the area. Jesus quoted from Isaiah 42:1-4 to explain the nature of His ministry, a ministry which involved restraining His power, and not using it against His opponents or those weak in the faith, even in the face of serious opposition.

The attacks against Jesus escalated with the Pharisees even accusing Him of casting out demons by using the power of Satan. Jesus rebuked the accusers for their foolish argument of attributing His power to cast out demons to Satan. He pointed out that if this were so, it meant that the kingdom of Satan was divided against itself. His actions clearly meant however that He was confronting the kingdom of Satan with a view to destroying Satan's power. He refused to give the scribes and Pharisees any signs, calling them an evil and adulterous generation, and declaring that the only sign that they would receive, would be the sign of Jonah the prophet's 'three days and three nights' experience. Jesus' denial of their request was a declaration that they already received many signs ranging from the description of Messiah by the prophets and their statements on the ministry of Messiah, the testimony of John the Baptist, His own testimony and the miracles He performed. He fulfilled everything that Messiah would do, performed many miracles which identified Him as the Messiah, and so their request really meant that they were being hypocrites. His resurrection would be the only sign they would receive. The resurrection would be the sign to Israel that God had indeed sent Him as their promised Messiah.

Jesus warned the disobedient rulers about the possibility of committing the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. He warned them about their antagonistic speech, which reflected their refusal to heed the Spirit, despite the abundant proof of the Spirit's work to which they themselves were witnesses. Jesus warned them about the need for genuine reformation, for if they did not repent and if they remained in unbelief and hardness of heart, their final state would be worse than the present. There was a danger of them being inhabited by demons after they were cleansed.

The deep spiritual teachings of Jesus sound so unusual that it shocked the disciples, and they therefore asked Jesus why He was teaching in parables for they also did not understand what His stories meant and they were very curious. Very important for them and for us, Jesus explained that there were certain great principles which determine events for nations and individuals. These He called “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”. These were central principles and to understand them was beyond the ability of the natural man. The disciples however were given the privilege of understanding these principles.

One writer comments: “The word translated ‘secrets’ means, literally, “mysteries”. In Scripture, a mystery is a truth which cannot be known by the normal exercise of human wisdom and knowledge. It is a truth about life, which, if we are to know, God must tell us about it, because it could never be discovered by the exercise of human intelligence. That is why these secrets, these mysteries, about the kingdom of heaven, and therefore about life, will never be found in science or literature or history or any other discipline of human knowledge or investigation. They are simply not there. And yet they are essential to the understanding of life. They must be disclosed to us by God.

That is why man's wisdom is never enough. We can discover many things about life, and, by our technology, we can invent a lot of useful implements and gadgets, but we will never, never satisfy human life on those terms. We must know more; and only God can tell us. That is why these mysteries are of great importance.

The Gospel itself is one of these mysteries. Its great secret, Paul says, is “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Col. 1:27.

Many writers have warned us that truth rejected or unused is truth lost. That is why it is so important that churches teach the truth and that people in churches take the truths in Scripture seriously and obey them. Unfortunately, too often this is not the case. One writer comments:

“God is constantly confronting men with truth about everything, and every level of life. Man is so constructed that he is made to act upon truth. But if he doesn't, he loses the truth, which has already been given to him. That is a very vital and important principle in understanding human life. That is the basis upon which God determines advance or regression, either in individuals or in nations.

These words are addressed to Christians today; for we hear the words of Jesus and the Apostles. We have the secrets of life made clear to us. If we do not hear, grasp, heed, follow, obey and act as required, we can blame no one but ourselves for the terrible judgment that we will face.

Note that the disciples were warned that in view of what they learned, the truths new and old, required action on their part. They were to be responsible stewards. They were to go out and teach about these hidden treasures of the kingdom. Each disciple was now like a faithful scribe. He was to become a teacher of the law, because they understood Jesus' message concerning the kingdom.

Matthew showed the all important nature of Jesus' teaching to the salvation of the nation and it is with this in mind that he continues to discuss opposition to Jesus. Jesus encountered widespread indifference and opposition in the latter part of His ministry.

Because of their rejection, further amazing truths were given to the disciples and to us. The people must have known to some extent that the kingdom of heaven was a source of great joy. They should really have wanted to give up everything for Messiah's kingdom. Its value was immeasurable. They as well as us, should want to respond to its offer logically and sensibly. The joy of receiving the kingdom should be our motivation.

Note that the parables teach us that the wicked regard God as an enemy and they are happiest when they are furthest away from Him. They will do everything possible to stay in their own hell. They do not want God's offer of joy.

## THE TEXT

Verse 24. The nature of the kingdom which had been spoken of by the prophets from Genesis 1 was now given new content. But note that the nature of the kingdom had not changed.

But now we are told that this is the age of the sowing of the Word of God with Jesus the Son of Man having His seed, or children.

Notice that we are given an indication of the time period between the first Coming of Christ and His Second Coming, for we know from agriculture or farming that when one sows seed the farmer has to wait for a considerable time till the plants grow and there can be a harvest. So the first stress is that there will a time of working and then waiting for growth.

The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven continue to be revealed for now it is now likened to a sower who sows good seed.

Note however the parables are given to stress spiritual truth, and so will only give descriptions of aspects of the Kingdom. Jesus is now comparing the Kingdom to the sower for the Kingdom in totality is much more than can be represented in one stroke.

In both this parable and the parable of the Soils there is a sower, a field, there is seed, and there is harvest. But unlike in that parable of the Soils there is no mention of the four classes of soil. Jesus had already taught that three kinds of soil represent unbelievers and one represent believers, so now He turns to pay attention to the believers.

Jesus ignores the soil which represent the superficial hearers of the Word for they were unbelievers and accordingly the Word of God has no root in them. He does not deal now with the superficial hearers represented by those with the light layer of soil but with a hard rock underneath this layer so that they respond temporarily but then wither because there no possibility of root taking place. They too are unbelievers. He passes by the third type of soil where thorns such as the pleasures of life choke out their half-hearted life so there is no true birth from God.

But there is “good soil” which responds well to the Word of God and these are genuine believers. The soil is good and the Word is good and they do well together as will be demonstrated by the fruit that is borne. Remember the principle, by the fruits you will know them.

Note the seed belongs to the sower, and the field belongs to the sower. The Word belongs to God and it is sown in a world that was created by God and belongs to Him. The world has been ravaged by sin, and so the good Word is sown to everyone, with only some of it really falling on good ground.

Verse 25. Here we now see information about Satanic activity. The evil Satan appears to do his dastardly work just as in the parable of the Soils when he came when the seed was scattered on the wayside, and the evil one came and snatched away what was sown in the heart.

But now he comes when he knows everyone is sleeping, not paying attention to what the Spirit is saying and warning, being distracted, and he secretly and silently covers up what he is doing while he sows his own seed. The way Satan works is described. His character is described. He is mean, cowardly, sadistic, says one writer. He waits and silently, secretly and wickedly plants his bad seed in the world.

So we expect to find bad seed wherever we are. It should be no surprise when bad seed turns up in the church, the family, the tribe, the community, or in the nation. Many will deliberately try to destroy the good work other have done because of spite. Bad seed are proud, jealous and quite evil, and like to draw disciples after them, The Apostle Paul therefore warned the brethren and elders at the Church in Ephesus of this very fact. We know sadly that church did not listen well and they suffered.

Once Satan does his planting he can go his way to plant somewhere else, for he knows the flesh and the world system will do much of his work for him.

One writer describes for us what Satan seed, the Tares are, and what they do: The tares we must understand in order to understand this parable. The word, tare, is a reference to the common vetch which has a marked resemblance to wheat, but the Greek word is a word that refers to what has been called the bearded darnel. The bearded darnel was a kind of grass. It is the only species of the grass family that has poisonous seed. When it comes to its fruition, it is characterized by seeds that are poisonous, and if you eat these seeds, then you have a stomach-ache. As a matter, you have more than that. You have nausea. You have convulsions. You are sick to your stomach. And it becomes, therefore, a very beautiful illustration of the result of the sowing of the seed of Satan in the hearts of men. So the parable of the wheat and the bearded darnel is a very significant thing. And not only that, but this particular type of grass breeds a particular type of poisonous fungus, so that when you eat the seeds, you are poisoned, and that is exactly what happens when an individual accepts the lie that Satan purports to claim”.

Verse 26. The inevitable occurred. When the good plants grew and began to bear fruit, then the bad plants appeared.

Verse 27. This householder must have been quite wealthy for he had servants and reapers. There have been many attempts to describe who these servants were but Jesus is silent on this matter.

The servants came to the householders to ask a question about the problem of evil. This is of course the greatest and most troubling problems in philosophy and theology. Philosophers and theologians have thought about and argued about this issue from time immemorial for if you understand sin, you will practically understand everything. We ask today, Where does evil come from?

Verses 28-29. But the owner of the field did not have any problem understanding what had happened and he knew the cause of the tares growing up beside the good plants. He said simply, an enemy had done this.

The spiritual lesson is that the Son of Man has sown good seed, the Word, in the world, the field, and the enemy Satan, has come and planted weeds. So if you examine yourself and you see weeds that have been sown in you, remember who you are and the spiritual prescriptions the Word has provided for your cure.

There is one great and fundamental source of sin. The enemy has Done This. He is your enemy.

The servants in human fashion and with human reasoning, then asked permission to pull up the tares and clean up the field so that the good wheat could grow unimpeded. But to our surprise the owner said No, do not do that. The roots of the good wheat and the tares would have become entangled and if one tried to pull up the tares some of the wheat would be pulled out of the ground. Since the wheat was still growing, the activity of pulling up tares could destroy plants that would at maturity be very productive. So the owner in His superior logic told the servants to let both tares and wheat grow up together for a while.

Not the owner was talking to agricultural experts and we would think they would be able to clean up the field without destroying some 'good' plants. But the owner said you are not expert enough to make that decision of choosing.

Verse 30. The owner instructed that both kinds of plants grow up together until the time of harvest. There would be a time when growth will cease. Then will come the harvest time.

Then the real experts, called the reapers, would come in and do their work. They will be instructed to first gather up the tares, bind them together in bundles, since they were all alike, sons in the same family, and then burn them up.

Then there will be a gathering of the wheat for these are of the same nature and the same family and they will be put together into the barns of the owner.

CONCLUSION

God has shown us the secrets of life and the magnificent and abundant blessings that we have from Jesus Christ. We are told that in Jesus Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, according to Colossians 2:2-3. If we don't get it, we should blame nobody but ourselves.

We have been told that the reapers are the angels and that they at the end of the age will separate the tares from the wheat, the sheep from the goats. Everyone will put into their family and deal with accordingly as they deserve.

Note the connection in the parables with the Word of God. The seed is being planted. Jesus and the Father and the Spirit are watching over developments. There must be a response to the Word of God which indicated deep commitment and love of the Word, for if there is no real abiding and lasting interest in the Word, one will be classified only as superficial hearers, superficial doers, and ones whom the cares of the world will pull away from the truths of God.

This is God's world, His field. But as the Apostle Paul stated, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work".

We are told Satan goes around as a roaring lion seeking whom he can devour. So side by side with the work of the Lord Satan works to plant or deposit his evil principles in the hearts of men.

Don't miss the point that Satan, the devil, as one writes said is God's ape and so his work is a parody of Christ's work. So much of the doctrines of Satan are very close to the doctrine of the Word of God. So if the Bible teaches about salvation by grace, Satan will preach about salvation, but his salvation is a salvation of works, one brought by your works. If you tell people that their will is not free because their will is locked into sinful modes they will resent you, for they will insist they have free will and can do whatever they want. They are capable of becoming better and better by their choices.

So let us be careful of the counterfeits. Satan produces a lot of those and they often really look quite good and close to the originals.

But from doing this Study there is no way you can truthfully say you did not know where sin, iniquity, lying, a look of materialism, envy, violence, pride, and the many sins come from. Jesus has identified the source for you. He stated clearly, the enemy has Done this. So go to God and make sure you will be among the good plants that are reaped at the end of the age.

Note that this parable does not relieve Elders and Pastors and brethren from exercising spiritual discernment, and not putting up with the bad seed planted in the church. Scripture tells believers over and over again how that situation is to be handled. If you have any doubts about that start your investigation by reading the letters to the churches in Revelation 2 and 3. But remember you are told to make every effort under the guidance of

the Spirit to bring erring souls, no matter how bad they seem to be, to repentance so that they will be forgiven.

We must act on the truth that we have been given. We should never ever say that we have learned great things and we will put them into practice some other day. We must act now. We must follow Jesus now. When Jesus gives us a command we must act on the truth now, or we will find that what we have been given will be taken away and we will be left with a hollow shell.

Sadly, as was foretold, there would be some, though seeing, closed their eyes, and though hearing, would stop their ears.

From these hearers Christ would remove His light, without which they would never see the kingdom of heaven or understand its mysteries, having rejected what they knew to be true.

Parables manifest a dual nature, in that they reveal the secrets of heaven to those who believe, while hiding the 'Treasures of Heaven' from those who hear and see, yet refuse to believe. To them the meaning is hidden and the benefit to be gained is lost.

Although simple in form, the parables of Jesus contain the most profound truths and their interpretation belongs to the highest order of Biblical exegesis that requires a great deal of spiritual knowledge and discernment.

Those who responded by embracing the truth and turn to God would be blessed and would gain entrance into the Kingdom and further light; but those who saw the truth and rejected it, closing their eyes and stopping their ears, would face the judgment and wrath of God.

The Sower of the Seed has sown the seed lavishly. He has created us and He can break up the hard heart.

All of us must ask our self the question that Jesus is asking us; " What is my heart like when I hear the Word? What do I feel when I hear that the promises of righteousness and power belong to the kingdom?

Am I simply concerned about how I feel at the moment, busy amassing riches, preoccupied with the cares of this life, focusing on things instead of people? Is my heart good soil, responsive, listening, thinking, acting, or do I forget the Word once the speaker of righteousness finishes?

May God help us to meditate on the parables and have Jesus control our lives in every respect.