

STUDY NOTES ON THE PARABLE OF THE SEED

GROWING INTO RIPE FRUIT: -

- Although this Parable is short, and contains no explanatory comments by Jesus, it does contain some important spiritual lessons for our understanding of how the Kingdom of Grace works within the heart of the follower of Christ.

Mark 4:26 – 29: - “And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

- In VS. 26, Jesus uses the term – “the kingdom of God”, when introducing this Parable. We need to understand that the New Testament term – “*the kingdom of God*”, can refer to two different Kingdoms of God. It can refer to either: -
 1. The Kingdom of God’s Grace working within the heart of the true child of God in this present world;
 2. Or, it can refer to the future Kingdom of Glory, which occurs after Jesus’ Second Coming has taken place.

NOTE: - Let us first briefly establish the existence of these two Kingdom’s of our Lord, and then we can identify which one Jesus is referring to in this Parable.

1.] The Kingdom of God’s Grace working within the heart of the child of God in this present world.

We have been exhorted by the Apostle Paul to come boldly to the *throne of grace*, through our Great High Priest Jesus Christ, so we may obtain mercy and grace to help us in times of need.

Hebrews 4:16: - “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

NOTE: - A throne automatically implies a King or a Kingdom does it not?

Jesus first recorded public message referred to the Kingdom of God being nigh at hand, and Jesus associated this Kingdom of God, with repentance and believing in the gospel.

Mark 1:14 & 15: - “Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.”

Luke 8:1: - “And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve *were* with him.”

Luke 17:20 & 21: - “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Note Jesus' Words - "The kingdom of God is within you."

What did the Apostle Paul teach concerning "our hope of glory"? Christ within you!

Colossians 1:25 - 27: - "Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; *Even* the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Romans 14:17: - "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

- In a number of Jesus' other parables, He used the expression - "the Kingdom of God", to refer to the mystery of the transforming power of God's grace.

Mark 4:30 - 32 & Luke 13:18 & 19 - the Parable of the Mustard seed growing into a great tree.

Luke 13:20 & 21- the Parable of the leaven leavening the whole lump of meal.

2.] The future Kingdom of Glory, which occurs after Jesus' Second Coming has taken place.

Matthew 19:28: - "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."


Matthew 25:31 - 34: - "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

Luke 21:27 - 31: - "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees; When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand."

2nd Timothy 4:1: - "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom."

Luke 13:28 - 30: - "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."

NOTE: - Both Kingdoms of God are essential in God's overarching Plan for our Salvation. First, we must be a member of the Kingdom of grace, so that we can be fit members for the future Kingdom of Glory, which is the eternal reward for the members of the Kingdom of Grace.

 Having established from the Scriptures, the existence of these two distinct and yet complementary Kingdoms of God, to which one was Jesus referring to in this Parable? The Kingdom of God's transforming grace.

- In the Parable, the man casts or sows the seed into the ground – Mark 4:26. This seed is explained by Jesus in other Scriptures, to be the Word of God.

Matthew 13:18 & 19: - “Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, ...”

Luke 8:11: - “Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.”

- It is by the seed of the Word of God, that we are to be born again – that is, we become spiritual babes in Christ.

1st Peter 1:23 – 25: - “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”

- Jesus taught Nicodemus, that a person had to be born again – to be born of water – that refers Christian baptism; and of the Spirit – that represents the transforming power of the Spirit of God, to be able to see the Kingdom of God - the Kingdom of God’s glory.

John 3:3 – 8: - “Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

- In the Parable, the seed took time to grow, but over time, it went through the various stages of growth and development. First, the Blade; then the ear; and then, the full corn in the ear – Mark 4:27 & 28. So it is to be in our spiritual walk. There is to be continual growth in Christ, through the transforming grace of God.

The Apostle Peter informs us that we are to grow up from being spiritual babes, by desiring the sincere or pure milk of God’s word. He has also exhorted us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour.

1st Peter 2:1 & 2: - “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.”

2nd Peter 3:18: - “But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.”

- The word of God’s grace is able to build us up – that is, to spiritually edify us, and to give us an inheritance among those who are sanctified.

Acts 20:32: - “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”

- It is good if our heart – our inner person is established with grace.

Hebrews 13:9: - “Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For *it is* a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.”

- God’s saving mercy is manifested to us, by the washing of regeneration – that is, the new birth; and by the renewing of the Holy Spirit. This will lead us to be justified by God’s grace, and to be heirs of the hope of eternal life. When we have believed in God, we are to be careful to maintain good works. This is a good and profitable teaching.

Titus 3:4 – 8: - “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. *This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.”

- Our inward person is to be renewed daily by the Holy Spirit – day by day. It is NOT a one off experience as many Christians believe, but a continual process of renewal. We are to walk after the Spirit and NOT the flesh, if we are IN Christ. Thus we will have the righteousness of God’s Law fulfilled within us, if we are truly walking after the Spirit.

2nd Corinthians 4:15 & 16: - “For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day.”

Romans 8:1 – 7: - “*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

- In the Parable, when the seed had finally reached the stage of bearing fruit, the Man who had planted the seed [this is Jesus – see Matthew 13:37], used the sickle to gather the fruit in, because the harvest was ready – Mark 4:29.

The Harvest is a clear reference to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, when He puts in the sickle to reap the harvest of this world, because the harvest is ripe. That is, the fruit of the gospel – the fruit of the grace transformed lives of the saints of the last days, will be fully ripe for Jesus to harvest.

Matthew 13:30 & 39: - “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. ... The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.”

Revelation 14:14 – 16: - “And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the

time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe. And he that sat on the cloud thrust in his sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.”

John 15:16: - “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.”

Philippians 1:5, 6 & 10 & 11: - “For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ: ... That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.”

Colossians 1:5 & 6: - “For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; Which is come unto you, as *it is* in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as *it doth* also in you, since the day ye heard *of it*, and knew the grace of God in truth.”

- That the gospel message of God’s saving grace is referring to the enabling power of God’s grace to transform the lives of believers, is fully revealed in the following passage, which also relates to Christ’s glorious Second Coming – the Blessed Hope – the harvest time in the Parable. The lives of Christ’s saint’s will have been completely transformed into holy and godly conduct through the saving grace of God. This is the message of both Paul and Peter.

Titus 2:11 – 15: - “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.”

2nd Peter 3:10 – 14: - “But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, what manner *of persons* ought ye to be in *all* holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.”

- When the fruit of the gospel seed is fully mature or ripe within the lives of the last generation of saints, the harvest will occur, with Christ coming to reap His redeemed and transformed saints and to reward them in His Kingdom of Glory.