

Sunday April 14th 2024
From Time to Time – Part 26

1). Ge 1:12 *And the earth brought forth grass, the herb that yields seed according to its kind, and the tree that yields fruit, whose seed is in itself according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.*

We have established over the past several weeks that there is a profound spiritual truth contained in this verse from Genesis Chapter 1 that has taken us beyond the letter to see how the verse directly impacts our opportunity for rulership with Christ in the Seventh Day. Because we have realized that this verse is not about herbs and trees per se but about two completely different outcomes that are possible for the Christian who hears the Word of the Kingdom. Two different outcomes that are pictured through the metaphor of trees used by the Lord in – Mt 7:15 *“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.*

We are of course dealing here with false prophets with respect to Israel, within the context of the broad way that leads to destruction and the narrow way that leads to life. But the truth here holds true in a Christian context as well, as these verses are immediately followed by those that present a Judgment Seat picture, where not everyone who calls Jesus Lord will enter the Kingdom of the heavens. And no matter whether we are dealing with Jews or Christians here, all are in

possession of spiritual life, and all are seen with a view to that which Jesus preached concerning the Kingdom of the heavens.

a). We see that a tree is used as a metaphor to depict those who adhere to the Way, the Truth, and the Life, those who have not practiced lawlessness, the good tree, and those who profess the false, those who have practiced lawlessness, the bad tree. And because of the connection we must make between these 'trees', and Genesis 1:12, neither can yield fruit except according to its kind. And this producing fruit according to its kind is what we have focused on in previous weeks.

b). Consequently, we have seen in previous weeks that Adam in his fallen condition, with his seed within himself could only yield fruit according to his fallen kind. And this was first shown to us in –
Ge 5:3 And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years, and begot a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth.

Unlike Adam, who was created in the image and likeness of God, Seth [and the same would be true for Cain and Abel] was procreated in the image and likeness of his father, Adam. And that all human beings from Adam onwards have been procreated according to this same kind is attested to in the Scriptures, where we find all have been born
Eph 2:1.....dead in trespasses and sins.....

1 Co 15:47 The first man was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man is the Lord from heaven. 48 As was the man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. 49 And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man.

And we had seen last time the contrast that we can draw between the procreated human being who bears the image and likeness of the man of dust, Adam, and Jesus, the heavenly Man, whose 'Father' is the Holy Spirit. And as the Holy Spirit, the breath of God and the Word of God are all interchangeable one with the other, we saw that the Seed,

which is the Word of God, implanted in Mary as she was overshadowed by the power of the highest, could only produce fruit according to its kind, hence the Christ was born of a virgin, the Word of God became flesh, and He remains the fullness of the Godhead bodily – Jn 1:14 *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, [the Jews] and we beheld His glory, [Peter, James and John on the Holy Mountain] the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, [begotten for the Seventh Day] full of grace and truth.*

The Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was sent specifically to the Jewish people, as the Second Man, the Last Adam that He might redeem in a foundational sense, that which was forfeited in the Garden, and as God in the person of Son He alone could pay redemption's price to accomplish this. And the price that He would pay is foreshadowed in the foundation – Ge 3:21 *Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.*

The price is death and shed blood, the death and shed blood of God, declared in every Passover lamb for the Jews – Ex 12:5 *Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats. 6 Now you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month. Then the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it at twilight. 7 And they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and on the lintel of the houses where they eat it..... 12 "For I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night, and will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. 13 Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt.*

Isa 53:5 *But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And*

by His stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Redemption's price has been paid for the ruined creation –
Ro 8:20 *For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

And He has paid redemption's price for all who would subsequently believe on the Lord Jesus Christ – Acts 16:31 *So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."*

And redemption's price has been paid in full with respect to the Jews, the earth, Christians and the Gentiles, to accomplish one specific, irrevocable, and glorious purpose – Ps 2:6 *"Yet I have set My King On My holy hill of Zion."* 7 *"I will declare the decree: The LORD has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today [for this Day – the 7th Day] I have begotten You. 8 Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession. 9 You shall break them with a rod of iron; You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel.' "*

And because we have accepted the Lord's substitutionary death on our behalf and God is satisfied with the price Christ has paid for us – 1 Co 16:20 *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

We now have a new man, a man of the Spirit, who is according to the kind of the One who created him and therefore completely separate from the old man, the man of the flesh. And if we apply the tree metaphor to this situation, we can realize that we have two trees in our 'garden', so to speak, the bad tree, the man of the flesh who adheres to the false and cannot be anything other than lawless, and

the good tree, the man of the Spirit who embraces the Truth and is in harmony with the Scriptures, and both can only yield fruit according to their kind.

2). And with respect to the Scriptures, it is the man of the Spirit alone who can hear and receive spiritual truth, the old man is completely and irrevocably unable to do either – 1 Co 2:12 *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. 13 These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. 14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

It is the man of the Spirit alone then who can receive that taught by the Spirit, the Word of the Kingdom, the wisdom brought forth from above out of God. However, we had also seen last time that hearing the Word of the Kingdom, even the 'epignosis' knowledge concerning it does not of itself provide a guaranteed entrance into the Kingdom. That which is heard and received must be mixed with faith to the extent that it will cause us to organize our lives according to that end. Having been justified we must then live by faith to the saving of the soul if we are to rule with Christ in the Seventh Day. Or to say this another way, we must walk by faith and not by sight. Or to say it yet another way, we are to sow to the Spirit and not to the flesh if we want to reap life for the age. And these things of course must be our consistent practice.

a). And as we look at this, we can obviously see that to consistently walk by sight, to consistently sow to the flesh is to practice lawlessness. It is to be the bad tree on the one hand and eat the fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil on the other. It is to allow Amalek to live by following the desires of our old man's 'father', exemplified in the Lord's admonishment of the Jewish leaders

recorded in – Jn 8:42 *Jesus said to them, “If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. 43 Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word. [not that they couldn’t listen, but they were so enmeshed in the wisdom from below, what seemed right in their own eyes that they had become dull of hearing] 44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, [let no one take your crown] and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it. 45 But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. [you do not have faith]*

And what the faithful and the unfaithful Christian have heard within our present context, just as it was with the Jews, is the same, they both hear/have heard, the Word of the Kingdom. The same message taught from the same Scriptures. But despite the exact same words being heard, maybe at the same time, the outcome for each is diametrically opposite. This we have seen in the Book of Hebrews, where we see Christians who have heard the Word of the Kingdom, turn back to perdition, just as Orpah did, and those like Ruth, who have faith to the saving of the soul. Those who having received the rain produced useful herbs and those who having received the same rain produced thorns and briers.

b). And we had begun to look last time at the distinction that is made between the faithful and the unfaithful Christian, who have both heard the Word of the Kingdom, in the first Chapter of the Book of Romans. And in this Chapter from Romans Paul records an action taken by God with respect to unfaithfulness and the Christian that we have previously seen in the Book of Acts, with its foundation at Kadesh Barnea.

3). To set the context for this let’s remember that the Kingdom of the heavens was re-offered to the same generation of eternally saved

Jews that Jesus had dealt with, by the newly created Church. Those who were now in possession of that which national Israel had rejected. And following Paul's conversion on the Road to Damascus, after he had been shown the 'mystery' and given the gospel he was to preach – Eph 3:2 *if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which was given to me for you, 3 how that by revelation He made known to me the mystery (as I have briefly written already, 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ), 5 which in other ages [generations] was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: 6 that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel... [of the glory of Christ]*

Paul would always follow God's prescribed order for sharing this gospel 'to the Jew first and also for the Greek'. As he entered every city, he would go to the Jews in their Synagogue first with the reoffer of the Kingdom of the heavens, and when, as happened most of the time, the Jews rejected the message and the messenger he then took this same message to the eternally saved Gentiles. And this was Paul's consistent practice until.....

a). There are three occasions in the Book of Acts when he turned away from the Jews to go to the Gentiles instead. The first of these we find when Paul was in Antioch, recorded in – Acts 13:44 *On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. 46 Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of life for the age, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so the Lord has commanded us: 'I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.' "*

The second occurred was when Paul was in Corinth – Acts 18:5 *When Silas and Timothy had come from Macedonia, Paul was compelled by the Spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. 6 But when they opposed him and blasphemed, he shook his garments and said to them, “Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” 7 And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue.*

And the third and terminal point arrived when Paul was in Rome, as we have seen many times before, the very same location of those Christians who were the recipients of his letter of the same name – Acts 28:23 *So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved. 25 So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: “The Holy Spirit spoke rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 saying, ‘Go to this people and say: “Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.” ’ 28 “Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!” 29 And when he had said these words, the Jews departed and had a great dispute among themselves. 30 Then Paul dwelt two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who came to him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no one forbidding him.*

Three is the first of five numbers used in Scripture to show completion and in the Book of Acts, the third occasion for setting aside the Jews and turning to the Gentiles marks the terminal point in the re-offer of the Kingdom of the heavens to that same generation of Jews, around 62AD. And the common denominator for all three occurrences, just as it was during the Lord's earthly ministry, is, unbelief. A complete absence of faith in those Jews who heard the Word of the Kingdom.

b). And the irony will not be lost on us that the terminal point for the re-offer of the Kingdom of the heavens to the Jews came in Rome, the capital of Gentile world power of that day, and concerned those who had previously declared that they had no king but Caesar.

c). And it is the same Word of the Kingdom that we see with respect to the Christians in Rome to whom Paul wrote – *Ro 1:1 Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God 2 which He promised before through His prophets in the Holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. 5 Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, 6 among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ; 7 To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

We can see Paul's credentials as an Apostle who had been separated, set apart from the unbelieving generation of Jews, to the 'good news' of God, concerning God's Son, the Son He had chosen to rule in Satan's place. Who was by His earthly birth through Mary, the greater Son of David promised in 2 Samuel Chapter 7, having the right to David's throne, the earthly realm of the Kingdom. And also, the Son of God 'with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead.' And in drawing attention to these things, we can see again,

as we did earlier today, the Lord's Jewish humanity and His Deity. The fullness of the Godhead bodily.

d). And we can see that Paul had received grace and Apostleship through the Lord for a very specific purpose, 'for obedience to the faith among all nations [Gentiles] for His name.' Now the phrase 'the faith', not faith in a generic sense but an articular faith, THE faith, is used in Scripture always in connection with the Word of the Kingdom, which is the 'good news' of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And those in Rome were also 'the called of Jesus Christ' for obedience to the faith. And as such they were 'beloved of God' and 'called to be saints.'

e). And it was to those who are beloved by God and called to be saints, the Christians in Rome who were obedient to the faith, that Paul continued his address – Ro 1:8 *First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. 9 For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of His Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers, 10 making request if, by some means, now at last I may find a way in the will of God to come to you. 11 For I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established— 12 that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. 13 Now I do not want you to be unaware, brethren, that I often planned to come to you (but was hindered until now), that I might have some fruit among you also, just as among the other Gentiles. 14 I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise. 15 So, as much as is in me, I am ready to preach the gospel to you who are in Rome also.*

Paul thanked God through Jesus Christ for those Christians in Rome, not all the Christians in Rome, but those whose faith was spoken of 'throughout the whole world.' Paul prayed for them continually and desired to visit them to preach the gospel to them. The same good news of God concerning His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord that we have

previously seen. And Paul wanted to do this to impart to them, ‘some spiritual gift’, so that they would be established.

f). And whatever Laodicean leftover is still stuck to our plate when we read, ‘spiritual gift’, let’s scrape it off by comparing Scripture with Scripture. And we can go to Paul’s benediction at the end of his letter to the Romans to make clear what this ‘spiritual gift’ was –
Ro 16:25 Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began 26 but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith— 27 to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

The spiritual gift seen in Chapter 1 was to establish the faithful Christians in Rome with regards to obedience to the faith. And from Chapter 16, we see that God would establish these faithful Christians for obedience to the faith according to the gospel, the preaching of Jesus Christ ‘according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began.’ The spiritual gift that Paul would impart was the Word of the Kingdom, the good news of God concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, and from this, according to v12 would come encouragement for Paul and the faithful Christians because of their mutual faith with respect to the message being taught.

g). And then as a result of the preaching of the good news of God and the mutual encouragement of their obedience to the faith would come fruit. This Word cultivated by faithful obedience would produce fruit whose seed was in itself according to its kind.

h). And this whole process is then exemplified by Paul and those in Rome with the same mutual faith in the verses that continue in Chapter 1 – *Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, [the same good news seen throughout this Chapter so far] for it is the power of God to salvation [the salvation of the soul] for everyone who believes, [everyone who has obedience to the faith] for the Jew first*

and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God [the righteousness that comes from God in response to our faith – seek first His kingdom and His righteousness] is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” [conduct their lives in obedience to the faith in the present so as to have life for the age]

But not all the Christians in Rome were obedient to the faith even though all had heard the same good news, and all had received a level of ‘epignosis’ knowledge with respect to what they had heard –

Ro 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. 24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

The unfaithful will have to wait until next time though, if we remain and the Lord is willing, and we have prayed.

