

Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup> 2024  
From Time to Time – Part 27

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.*

Mt 7:18 *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.*

Mt 12:30 *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*

All of these verses present different facets of the same truth concerning the two possible outcomes for the Christian who hears the Word of the Kingdom, and the final verse, taken from Matthew Chapter 12, records the words which the Lord spoke to the Jews within the context of the events of Matthew Chapter 12 that led to the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Events we will remember that effectively marked the end of the offer of the Kingdom of the heavens to the Jews by the Lord. And the verse itself clearly states that there was, and is, no middle ground to be found, just as a bad tree cannot bear good fruit nor a good tree bad fruit as both can only yield according to its kind.

a). National Israel was against the Lord and did not gather with Him, the bad tree producing bad fruit, and as a consequence, the Kingdom of the heavens, the heavenly realm of the Kingdom for which the nation had been created, was irrevocably taken from the nation. The heavenly realm of the Kingdom was lost and could never be regained.

b). But there were those individuals within the Jewish nation who were with Him, and who did gather with Him, who would be good trees, who had believed that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Those who had heard and received both the message of repentance and the messenger, those who, as a result of their belief, will have a part in the Kingdom of the heavens that has been lost by national Israel. The Kingdom of the heavens gained by these individuals that can never be lost to them. And these two groups of Jews are seen with respect to judgment in – Jn 5:28 *Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice 29 and come forth—those who have done good [who were with Him and gathered with Him, the good trees], to the resurrection of life [for the age], and those who have done evil [who were against Him, who scattered abroad, the bad trees], to the resurrection of condemnation [death with respect to the age].*

And that which will make the distinction between the two groups at the time of their resurrection and judgment is faith, or the absence of it, while they were alive – Jn 5:45 *Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. 46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. 47 But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"*

And the significance of faith in determining their outcome should not be any surprise to us as it is just what we have seen in the account of Jacob and Esau, just what we have seen regarding the first generation of Israel at Kadesh Barnea and Joshua and Caleb. Just what we have seen with Ruth and Orpah and the wise and foolish virgins, with the earth that drinks in the rain that often comes upon it producing herbs that are useful or thorns and briers. And the same can only remain true within our own experience within the time in which we live – Heb 4:2 *For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; [contextually the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt, but*

*equally true for the generation of Jews at the Lord's first Advent] but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

We will either gather with Him being a good tree or scatter abroad being a bad tree. Consequently, based on what is recorded in the Scripture, we must allow for the fact that all those to whom the Word of the Kingdom has been preached, will either respond to this Word by faith, to gather with Him, or will respond to it apart from faith, to scatter abroad. There is no middle ground.

b). And both these responses to hearing the Word of the Kingdom have been pictured for us through the account of the two types of Christians found in Rome, in the first chapter of the Book called Romans.

2). And as we go back to the study of this Chapter, let's please be very clear in our understanding that all Christians, from the beginning of this dispensation to the present day, can only fall into one of two categories, either they will be faithful, or they will be unfaithful. There is no middle ground, as we have already seen from the words spoken by the Lord. And we must also be very clear that a Christian is counted to be faithful, or unfaithful, by the Lord with respect to only one thing, 'When anyone hears the Word of the Kingdom.' It is only the Word of the Kingdom, the gospel of the glory of Christ, the mystery entrusted to Paul, that can result in 'the faith'. The faith that will lead to producing fruit according to its kind, to the saving of the soul –  
Heb 11:6 *But without faith [to the saving of the soul] it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.*

And it is important for us to recognize that the only distinction God makes between Christians is between those who are faithful and those who are unfaithful because of what might still be lurking in the shadow of our past with respect to how Christians are to be identified.

a). In this respect there is no such thing in Scripture as 'a real Christian', or a 'true Christian', or 'a fake Christian.' Such terminology comes out of the wisdom of man, brought forth from the wisdom from below. And terminology such as this can only be generated out of an ignorance of what the Scriptures have to say on the matter, particularly with respect to salvation.

b). However, regardless of what the worldly wisdom of self-imposed religion might say, we will choose to be resolutely settled in our understanding of the way Scripture divides Christians into the faithful and the unfaithful. And this division will be revealed at the Judgment Seat, where the faithful, those who have had faith to the saving of the soul, thereby bearing fruit for the Kingdom, the good trees, will be revealed as overcomers, and the unfaithful, who have not exercised this type of faith, and consequently have not borne the right kind of fruit, as having been overcome.

c). And the overcomers at the Judgment seat find their parallel with the Jews who will experience the resurrection of life for the age, while those who are overcome find their parallel with the Jews who will experience the resurrection of condemnation. And again, as a reminder, there is no middle ground.

3). Ro 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."*

We will remember that Paul's letter to the Roman Christians was written during the time of the re-offer of the Kingdom of the heavens to the same generation of eternally saved Jews by the newly created church, hence the phrase 'for the Jew first and also for the Greek'; a phrase which we will remember from last time. And we will also remember that during the time of the re-offer, throughout the Acts period, the Word of the Kingdom was the universally proclaimed message among the churches. It was then and is now, the good news

concerning God's Son, the Son He has chosen to rule the earth with those found faithful to rule with Him in the Seventh Day in the place of Satan and his angels, towards which some, but not all, of the Christians in Rome had exercised the faith.

a). And it is this good news of God concerning His Son and His Kingdom that the faithful Christians in Rome, like Paul, were not ashamed of. And it is this same good news that is the power of God to the salvation of the soul for everyone who believes, for everyone who has faith, both then and now – 1 Pe 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time..... 9 receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls.*

In this respect it is really not possible for us to talk about those Christians who have never heard and do not hear the Word of the Kingdom in terms of them being faithful or unfaithful, as from a scriptural perspective, they have nothing towards which they can exercise faith to the saving of the soul as they know nothing about it and therefore they have nothing from which they can turn away in unfaithfulness either. However, this does not provide mitigating circumstances for them. 'I didn't know' can never be an excuse because all have spiritual life, and all have the Holy Spirit who could guide them into all truth. And throughout this dispensation the Lord has been standing at the door and knocking, ready to enter in, to any Christian who hears His voice and opens the door – Re 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

And at the Judgment Seat, those in Spiritual ignorance, who have not heard the Word of the Kingdom, can only be counted as the same as those who had heard the Word of the Kingdom and turned away from it. Because neither group will have had faith to the saving of the soul, nor will either group have borne the fruit necessary for a place in the Kingdom of the heavens to be theirs – Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and **given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.**"*

And without having faith to the saving of the soul, neither group can receive the righteousness, which is from God, by faith, cutting them off from the out-resurrection from the dead – Php 3:8 *Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; 10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, 11 if, by any means, I may attain to the out-resurrection from the dead.*

And this would mean that they cannot have acts of righteous. The bad tree can only bear fruit according to its kind – Re 19:7 *Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready." 8 And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.*

1 Co 3:12 *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's*

*work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.*

And those Christians in Rome who had heard the Word of the Kingdom but had not responded to it by having faith to the saving of the soul are dealt with in the second half of Romans Chapter 1 –

*Ro 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.” 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.*

Vv16-17 provide a summary statement concerning those Christians in Rome who had faith to the saving of the soul and the contrast begins to be drawn in v18, between them and the unfaithful. And the first thing we will note is that the unfaithful suppress, or hold back, the truth in unrighteousness. Although they know the truth, they choose not to look at it, causing them to become futile in their thoughts. Allowing their thoughts to be governed by what seems right in their own eyes, thoughts that have no value with respect to the salvation of the soul. And in doing this we can find a parallel with the scoffers in 2 Peter – 2 Pe 3:5 *For this they willfully forget.....*

And because of this, they will receive the wrath of God at the judgment seat. As the Scripture says, ‘Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire’. We find this same

distinction again in – 1 Th 5:7 *For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. 8 But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. 9 For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.....*

In these verses from Thessalonians, we find the distinction is made between those of the night and those of the Day, a distinction made between those who ‘sleep’ and get ‘drunk’, both terms used metaphorically, and those who are ‘sober’, who put on ‘the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.’

b). And with respect to the Christians in Rome, the faithful, who were not ashamed of the gospel of Christ would correspond to those associated with the Day from 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5, and likewise the unfaithful, with those associated with the night. And the metaphor used by Paul in the Thessalonian verses of being drunk at night might well remind us of familiar verses from Ephesians – Eph 5:15 *See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, 16 redeeming the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And **do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation**; but be [continually] filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20 giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, 21 submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

In both Ephesians and Thessalonians being ‘drunk with wine’ needs to be understood beyond the letter of it. The teetotal Christian might think himself safe in this respect, but anything that would so occupy the unfaithful Christian to bring about dissipation in their life, a life of futility with respect to the Kingdom, would have to be included. Esau despising his birthright, Orpah going back to her people and her gods and the first generation of Israel wanting to choose a leader to take them back to Egypt are all examples of a dissipated life, an



unprofitable life as a result of unfaithfulness that can only end in destruction with respect to the Kingdom Age.

4). And exactly the same is seen in the parables that the Lord gave which are recorded in the Christian section of His discourse on the Mount of Olives – Mt 24:40 *Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken [alongside Christ as His companion] and the other left. 41 Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken [alongside Christ as His companion] and the other left. 42 Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming.*

The verses that detail the one taken and the one left, take us to the end of the matter, so to speak, and also provide the foundation on which our understanding of the end of the matter is to be based. These verses talk of Christ's return at an hour no one knows. But when that time does come, when we all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, the faithful Christian will be taken alongside Christ as His companion, as His co-heir, but the unfaithful Christian will not.

a). In these verses there is no detail given concerning why one of the two individuals is taken and the other left, but that which follows begins to piece this together - Mt 24:45 *“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food [literally ‘meat’] in due season? 46 Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. 47 Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. 48 But if that evil servant says in his heart, ‘My master is delaying his coming,’ 49 and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, 50 the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, 51 and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

In these verses the Lord's 'household' is introduced, all Christians who are His household servants. And these servants are seen with

respect to being faithful and wise in giving 'meat' in due season. With the use of the word 'meat' inevitably taking us to that surrounding an 'epignosis' knowledge of Christ and His Kingdom. We are again dealing with those who have heard the Word of the Kingdom and have received an 'epignosis' knowledge of it, just like the faithful and unfaithful Christians in Rome.

b). As this parable adds to the one before it, we can clearly see that the man taken from the field and the woman taken from the mill to be a companion with Christ are the faithful and wise servants who provided 'meat' for those in the Lord's household 'in due season'. The man and the woman who were not taken but left would be the unfaithful and foolish servant who began to beat their fellow servants and to eat and drink with the drunkards. A word picture that we saw before in 1 Thessalonians and Ephesians.

c). All the Lord's household servants who have heard the Word of the Kingdom and received an 'epignosis' knowledge of it have the potential to be faithful and wise, but according to the parable this will not be the case. For the faithful and wise the promise remains that the Lord will make them ruler 'over all His goods'. For the unfaithful however, just as we saw with the unfaithful Christians in Rome, the wrath of God awaits them, described in the parable as being cut in two and given their portion with the hypocrites.

d). And the use of the word hypocrites in this context will take us back to the previous Chapter in Matthew, Matthew Chapter 23, where the word is used seven times in succession to describe the scribes and Pharisees, along with seven 'woes' pronounced against them. In other words, then, the unfaithful Christian will receive the same outcome as the scribes and Pharisees at the Lord's first Advent, as they will have essentially done exactly the same, suppressed the truth in unrighteousness in order to pursue their dissipated life.

e). And we will be careful in how we handle the servants who provide 'meat' to their fellow servants, as we don't want to lay this at the feet of the pastor/teachers only. And certainly not at the feet of those who have not heard the Word of the Kingdom. We will keep in

mind that this series of parables within the context of Jesus's teaching on the Mount of Olives, must be looked at together, forming an overview of the subject being dealt with by Him, faithfulness and unfaithfulness among Christians who have heard the Word of the Kingdom.

f). Further explanation of that seen in the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servant is then provide in the parable that follows -  
Mt 25:1 *"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2 Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, 4 but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.*

But this will have to wait until next time, if we remain and the Lord is willing, and we have prayed.