

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 36 (September 1-7, 2013)

We will continue our study of the Parables of the kingdom of Heaven. These stories teach us vital facts about His kingdom on earth known as the Millennial Kingdom.

Sunday -- September 1 (Matthew 13:36-39)

You read this entire parable yesterday (Matthew 13:24-30) and were asked to consider several questions. Jesus clearly answers every detail in His explanation in today's text. Only He, the Son of Man, can sow good seeds (v. 37). He does this by revealing the Word of God (Bible) so that all of us can have access to His will and His way. The seeds of His Word are sown throughout the **world**, especially now when the Bible has been translated into almost every language. Many choose to accept God's plan of salvation and become "sons of the kingdom." Most, however, reject His generous offer and remain "sons of the evil one" (v. 38). **The devil** is the enemy who sows the bad seeds. Many in our enlightened society do not believe that he exists, but Jesus encounters him and warns about him often. A harvest of the earth is coming soon which will be carried out by angels (v. 39). We will continue this parable tomorrow.

Monday -- September 2 (Matthew 13:24-30)

Let's return to the parable and look at several questions raised by our Lord. Many have used this parable to say that **true believers** and **phonies** exist within the **church**. (I viewed it this way earlier in my ministry.) Jesus, however, clearly states that He is talking about the **world**, not the church (v. 38). Although it is **true** that not all baptized members of the church have been truly "born again," this is not the point in His parable. He is saying that the devil works **day and night** (v. 25) to sow his seeds of untruth in the **world**. In this story, Jesus is referring to **darnel**, a plant that looks identical to wheat until the later matures and forms heads (v. 26). Only at that time is it possible to accurately tell the difference. That leads us to the servant's question (v. 28) that we will examine tomorrow.

Tuesday -- September 3 (Matthew 13:24-30)

God has called His followers to be the "light of the world" and the "salt of the earth" (see Matthew 5:13-14). We are not placed in the world to judge; **that is His job**. We will always make mistakes in our assessment because "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7). Therefore, God does not ask **us** to pull up the weeds, because it is inevitable that we will pull up some wheat at the same time (v. 29). At the end of The Great Tribulation, the Lord will send His angels to "weed out of His kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil" (v. 41). **This is not The Rapture!** When the rapture takes place, the **saved** are called into heaven and the **lost** are left on earth (see 1 Corinthians 15:50-55) to face the terrible period of tribulation, which will last seven years. At the end of the tribulation, the **lost** are judged and the **saved** are left on earth to begin the Millennial Kingdom of our Lord (v. 30). We will conclude this parable in tomorrow's study.

Wednesday -- September 4 (Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43)

I ended yesterday's study with a bold statement with which some of you may disagree. Look at verse 30 and you will clearly see that the **weeds** are gathered first; then the **wheat** is brought into the barn. That is exactly opposite from the rapture when **believers** are called home to spend seven years with the Bridegroom prior to returning to earth to begin the Lord's earthly reign of 1000 years. Verse 41 teaches that all temptations will be removed along with all sin. What a glorious time that will be! We have done a poor job of being "salt" and "light" because the devil is definitely winning right now (see Luke 4:5-7). During the kingdom, however, "the righteous will shine like the sun" (v. 43). I pray that you have spiritual ears to hear this truth!

Thursday -- September 5 (Revelation 20:1-4; ref. Rev. 19:11-21)

In case some of my readers have never heard about the coming earthly kingdom of Jesus Christ, I will spend the rest of the week discussing the Scriptures that reveal this truth. Today's scene in Revelation 20 takes place immediately after Armageddon when Jesus leads the armies of heaven (angels and redeemed saints) to defeat the antichrist and his false prophet (Rev. 19:11-18). These one-world government leaders become the first two citizens of hell (v. 19-20). All non-believers left on earth are killed and placed in Hades awaiting final judgment (v. 21). Those who are left on earth include all the saints from all the ages who have returned with the Lord to defeat the forces of evil (Rev. 19:14), the martyred converts (v. 4), and new believers who have miraculously survived the tribulation. A powerful angel (probably Michael) captures Satan (v. 1-3) and locks him in the Abyss (a bottomless pit where the most wicked demons are kept). Those who teach that the devil is not real will have found out once and for all that he has always been the force of evil on earth.

Friday -- September 6 (Revelation 20:4-6)

Satan is locked in the Abyss for a thousand years (v. 3), and Jesus takes His seat on His throne in the current city of Jerusalem. You can see why today's godless world leaders are trying hard to take the control of that city away from the Jews as well as why God commands Christians to "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Psalm 122:6). All true believers from all the ages have been given authority to judge in Eternity along with those who have been martyred during the tribulation. Islam is currently at war against the kingdom of God, so few people are still questioning the fact that **beheading** will be the method of execution during the tribulation (v. 4). We have no fear of death because our names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life guaranteeing our place in the first resurrection (v. 5-6). Glory to the Lamb! The second death has no power over us!

Saturday -- September 7 (Revelation 20:7-15)

During the reign of Christ in Jerusalem, the curse that God placed on mankind in the Garden of Eden will be reversed and Christians will live for a long time again (see Isaiah 65:20). They will have many children and will populate the earth. Satan is locked up in the Abyss so that he cannot deceive the nations, but earthly humans will still possess a **sinful nature** and a **free will**. Even under the absolute rule of Jesus at the end of a thousand years, many will rebel when the devil is released from prison and allowed to organize those who live according to their sinful desires. Satan's new army will attack Jesus in Jerusalem and the current world will cease to exist (v. 7-10). The rest of the chapter tells about the final judgment of all whose names are **not** written in the Lamb's Book of Life. No one will survive this "works" judgment! Be sure that you have asked the Lord to place your name in His Book! If so, you will never be judged for your sins! (See 2 Corinthians 5:21)