

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (2)

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He was also saying, "How can we show what the kingdom of God is like, or what parable can we use to describe it? It is like a mustard seed planted in the ground. Although it is the smallest of all the seeds on earth, when it is planted it comes up and becomes larger than all the garden plants. It grows such large branches that the birds in the sky can nest in its shade." With many other parables like these, Jesus kept speaking his message to them according to their ability to understand. He did not tell them anything without using a parable, though he explained everything to his disciples in private. (Mark 4:30-31)
 [International Standard Version]

In our previous issue, we discussed two things through the parable of the mustard seed; firstly, what the kingdom of God is, and secondly, how the kingdom of God is revealed to us at this present time. In this article, I would like to discuss with you briefly the third point; how the kingdom of God will be realized in the ages to come.

1. How the Kingdom of God will be realized.

The seeds sown in the beginning were quite few; it was indeed quite a few number of people. However, on the day of Pentecost, 3000 people were saved instantly, and in a little while after that, more than 500 people were led to salvation by the Lord. While Jesus was persecuted and believers also suffered from horrible persecutions, churches showed the most normal and solid growth.

However, later in history, as Christianity became politically adopted as the state religion in many countries, churches began to show unhealthy growth. Many people began to convert themselves to Christians so to speak, only because it was necessary to obtain social status. In terms of the number of believers, 'Christianity' has accomplished amazing growth. However, its spiritual power has been totally compromised alongside. For many people, so-called 'Christianity' has become a stone to stumble over which prevents them from reaching the true salvation.

The reason for this regrettable development of 'Christianity' is the wrong belief that the kingdom of God is to be constructed by human hands. The kingdom of God will absolutely be realized on this earth on the day to come. However, it will never be

built by humans. It will be brought by nothing but the Second Coming of Jesus into this earth.

2. Those who will be judged.

What are the characteristics of the kingdom of God? It is the land that is governed by Divine righteousness and Divine peace. However, before this governance by righteousness and peace is realized, there will be the judgment of God. A typical example of this judgment can be found in the life of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon in the era of the Old Testament. One day, King Nebuchadnezzar saw a vision in his head while he was in bed, in which he saw a tree in the middle of the earth, the height of which was very great. The following verses from the Book of Daniel describe the vision:

The tree grew large, became strong, and its top reached the sky. It could be seen to the ends of the earth. Its foliage was beautiful, its fruit bountiful, and its food sufficient for everyone. The animals of the field found shade under it, the birds of the sky lived in its branches, and every creature was fed from it. (Daniel 4:11-12)

However, this large grown tree was cut down by order of the sacred one and was completely destroyed leaving only the stump. Let us continue to read the Book of Daniel:

Cut down the tree and cut off its branches. Strip off its foliage and scatter its fruit. Let the animals get out from under it, and let the birds leave its branches. Nevertheless, leave the stump and its roots in the ground, but bind it with iron and bronze in the field grass. Let him be drenched with dew from the sky, and let him graze with the animals in the grass of the earth.

This order is announced by the observers, and the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over human kingdoms and grants them to whomever he desires, and he places the least important of men over them. (Daniel 4:14-15, 17)

The Lord God was aware how arrogant King Nebuchadnezzar was, and He judged the king as if He had cut down a large grown tree. Just like this, the Lord will judge 'Christianity' as a man-made religion in the day to come. And until this judgment begins, this 'Christianity' will continue to grow larger and larger. This development is the work of the Devil. Churches that have obtained the worldly authority are likened to "the notorious prostitute" in the Book of Revelation. Let us look at the Revelation, chapter 17:

Then one of the seven angels who held the seven bowls came and told me, "Come, I will show you how the notorious prostitute who sits on many waters will be judged. The kings of the earth committed sexual immorality with her, and those living on earth became drunk with the wine of her immorality.

Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was controlled by blasphemy. It had seven heads and ten horns. The woman wore purple and scarlet clothes and was adorned with gold, gems, and pearls. In her hand she was holding a gold cup filled with detestable things and the impurities of her immorality. On her forehead was written a secret name: Babylon the Great, the Mother of Prostitutes and Detestable Things of the Earth.

I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of the saints and the blood of the witnesses to Jesus. I was very surprised when I saw her. Why are you surprised?" The angel asked me. "I will tell you the secret of the woman and the beast with the seven heads and the ten horns that carries her. (Revelation 17:1-7)

It is described in the Revelation, chapter 19, how a large crowd praises the Lord when this notorious prostitute is judged.

After these things, I heard what sounded like the loud voice of a large crowd in heaven, saying, "Hallelujah! Salvation, glory, and power belong to our God. His judgments are true and just. He has condemned the notorious prostitute who corrupted the world with her immorality. He has taken revenge on her for the blood of his servants. (Revelation 19:1-2)

It is after this judgment has been completed that the kingdom of God will come into reality in this world. Jesus, who died on the cross, was resurrected and raised to heaven, will come back to this earth in order to build the Holy City of His own in Jerusalem. When this is done, there will be no one left to stand against the Lord God and nothing will continue to develop in an unhealthy way.

3. Jews as the Center of this World.

When this occurs, the Jewish people will be the center of all the people of the world just like one mustard seed. Although Jews have been a very small group of people so far, who have been despised and

abominated by many other people throughout the history, they are destined to bless all nations of the earth according to the Bible. It is allegorically described in the Book of Ezekiel, chapter 17 as follows:

This is what the Lord God says, 'I'm also going to take a shoot from the top of a cedar and plant it. I'll pluck off its delicate twigs and transplant it on a high and lofty mountain. I'll transplant it on Israel's land, and it will grow branches, bear fruit, and become a majestic cedar. All sorts of birds will rest under it, and they'll settle down in the shade of its branches.'

Then all the trees of the fields will know that I, the Lord, bring down the lofty tree and exalt the lowly tree. I dry up the green tree and cause the dry tree to bud. I the Lord have spoken this, and I will fulfill it. (Ezekiel 17:22-24)

This same fact is described practically in the Book of Zechariah:

This is what the Lord of the Heavenly Armies says: 'In the future, people will come, including residents of many cities, and they will travel from one place to another place and say, "Let's go quickly to pray in the presence of the Lord and to inquire of the Lord of the Heavenly Armies.' And I will go, too. Many people and powerful nations will come to inquire of the Lord of the Heavenly Armies in Jerusalem, and to pray in the presence of the Lord.

This is what the Lord of the Heavenly Armies says: 'In the future, ten men speaking all the languages of the nations will grab hold of one Jewish person by the hem of his garment and say, "Let us go up to Jerusalem with you, because we heard that God is with you.'" (Zechariah 8:20-23)

Jesus too explained to the Samaritan woman the significance of the Jewish people in this world:

You don't know what you're worshiping. We Jews know what we're worshiping, because salvation comes from the Jews. (John 4:22)

This is telling that, eventually, the Jewish people will be the center of the whole world and Jesus will be ruling all Jews. And along with Jesus, Jews will be the rulers of the entire world.

Jesus is still disrespected by many people today in this world and so are all true believers of Jesus. However, Jesus will come back to this world before long with absolute authority and power. Then, true believers of

God will begin to rule this world along with Jesus.

4. Purpose of Our Lord.

Now, why did Jesus use parables to explain the truth to the crowd of those days? It was because otherwise, they would never turn their attention to what He was telling them. Try to imagine that Jesus explicitly explained to them what He wanted, saying, "I am the good seed and am willing to give up my own life for the people in order to open the way of salvation for them." What if He continued to tell them straightly, "I see you people as hard trodden ground along the path, who try to look like a faithful people but actually do not truly know my God. Therefore, at the time of the judgment, none of you will be allowed to receive a reward from God." They would never have wanted to lend their ears to Him for a moment. In fact, they would have been so upset and might have even tried to put Jesus to death. By using parables, He prepared the way for the people to share in His grace and He gave them an opportunity to repent.

Because people were not willing to lend their ears to the truth, Jesus had to tell them in parables. However, to His disciples, He explained everything explicitly without using parables. It was because their hearts were already open to the truth and they were prepared to repent. In this world today, I suppose that people do not want to have the real churches which God truly wants to give them. Instead, they seek to see a paradise realized in this world, which is not the intention of God. True churches have always been discreet little flocks throughout history. Still, they gathered people who knew Jesus personally and were convinced of their salvation.

Jesus has promised, "I will build my congregation." (Matthew 16:18) To this date, this is still the purpose of the Lord. That is to say, Jesus desires to lead the people to repentance, wants to give them true faith and expects them to follow His guidance obediently. Those who refuse to understand this purpose of His are serving the Devil. Many people do not wish to live according to this purpose of the Lord; instead, they are willing to build the paradise of their own in this world. It is the desire of many politicians, revolutionists, philosophers and all those who believe in 'Christianity' as a man-made religion to build such worldly paradise on their own accord.

All attempts to build a paradise using human strength had always failed. Adolf Hitler of Germany stated that his Third Reich would continue for one thousand years, but in actuality, it ended after 12 years. Anyone who purposes to build a paradise by human hands is acting against the Lord God and is working as loyal

subordinates to the Devil.

The purpose of the Lord God is to build true churches on this earth. All those who were reborn through the Holy Spirit and by His Word belong to these true churches. Until Jesus comes back to this earth, evildoers will continue their evil deeds more and more while the righteous will move forward in an even more righteous way. Jesus will come back when both the good and evil have reached their perfections. The perfection of evil is accomplished by pursuing outward things, such as power, honour, and wealth, while the perfection of the good is accomplished through the transformation of believers to conform to the image of Jesus. It is written that its consequence is "the church of glory." (Ephesians 5:27)

It is extremely important for us to consecrate ourselves to the Lord and stay away from evil. It is what the Bible tells us. It clearly tells believers not to have any fellowship with pagan religious leaders, but stay away from them, and not even to greet them. This was actually how our 'Christian assemblies' were formed. Believers came to realize the discrepancies between what was sought in the Scripture and what they were taught in the so-called 'churches.' When they desired to live the life strictly according to what was written in the Bible, they had no other choice but to leave their churches. Today, these kinds of "Christian assemblies" have spread all over the world.

People who belong to these kinds of 'assemblies' refuse professional clergies and membership systems; they do not even have any form of systematic connections with existing Christian organization or with the so-called established churches. The true Christians who took this attitude have always been there since the time the Acts of the Apostles was written until today. Christians who took this attitude were always fiercely persecuted throughout history. They were always persecuted by organized Christianity and established churches, so to speak.

5. From Pentecost to the Kingdom of God.

The time between Pentecost and the Rapture, or Jesus' coming in the air, at which all true believers will be taken up to heaven is called "the time of the Holy Spirit," in which the churches as the Body of the Lord Jesus are constructed everywhere. When those who believe in the Lord and have the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts gather in one place, the Christians' assembly is formed. And when Jesus comes back to meet us in the air, and Christian assemblies that are the Body of the Lord Jesus are taken up to heaven, needless to say, the Holy Spirit will be taken up together.

After the Holy Spirit is raised to heaven, evil spirits that are left in this world will be able to exercise their power at will. Although, this period won't last long and it will end in as short as seven years, during this period, the world will be ruled by false prophets and the false messiah. This will be a very difficult time of tribulation, especially for the Jewish people.

When this seven-year period is over, and Jesus comes back to this earth, all other people and nations who persecuted the Jews will have to face judgment without exception. Then, the kingdom of God will begin. This kingdom of God will continue for one thousand years, which will be governed in peace and harmony. In this kingdom of God, there will be no weapons to fight wars. It is prophesied in the Book of Isaiah:

He will judge between the nations, and will render verdicts for the benefit of many. They will beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nations will not raise swords against nations, and they will not learn warfare anymore. (Isaiah 2:4)

6. Little Flock

By the way, we can learn from the Bible that, the kingdom of God is not necessarily something to come in the future, but it has already been brought into this world today. Paul wrote in his Epistle to the Romans:

For God's kingdom does not consist of food and drink, but of righteousness, peace, and joy produced by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 14:17)

This God's kingdom is characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy. Actually, those who have accepted Jesus have experienced the kingdom of God in their faith. In the fellowship among the newly reborn people, the kingdom of God has been already realized. That is to say, those who are born newly from above, have righteousness, peace, and true joy. It was exactly what Jesus meant when He said;

'The kingdom of God is not coming with a visible display. People won't be saying, "Look! Here it is!" or "There it is!" because now the kingdom of God is among you. (Luke 17:20-21)

By the Holy Spirit, the kingdom of God is brought into the heart of each believer. Let us look at what the Scripture says:

Instead, be concerned about his kingdom, and these things will be provided for you as well. Stop

being afraid, little flock, because your Father is pleased to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:31-32)

In this verse, an expression, "little flock" is used, which refers to the group of true believers who are born again through the Holy Spirit. It is in such flocks that the kingdom of God has already been realized. Saints in Ephesus experienced the kingdom of God in Jesus Christ.

You used to be dead because of your offenses and sins that you once practiced as you lived according to the ways of this present world and according to the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now active in those who are disobedient. Indeed, all of us once behaved like them in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of our flesh and senses. By nature we were destined for wrath, just like everyone else.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love for us even when we were dead because of our offenses, made us alive together with the Messiah (by grace you have been saved), raised us up with him, and seated us with him in the heavenly realm in the Messiah Jesus. (Ephesians 2:1-6)

Saints in Colossae, who were in the Son of God, also knew how the God's Kingdom was actually like

...and might thank the Father, who has enabled us to share in the saints' inheritance in the light. God has rescued us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of the Son whom he loves, through whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Colossians 1:12-14)

Now, have we personally experienced these things indeed? Have we been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the kingdom of the Son as they described in the verses above?

All humans are either under the control of the Devil or under the control of Jesus. Those who have admitted their sins, accepted Jesus as their Saviour and are determined to obey Jesus throughout their lives have already experienced the kingdom of God today.

Jesus is coming back soon to take up all those who belong to Him. When this world will be facing the hardest sufferings and tribulations ever, in heaven, the wedding ceremony between Jesus the Lamb and believers of all churches as the bride will be in progress.

To those who are not certain about the kingdom of God yet, Jesus desperately desires to give them conviction

of their salvation today. The Lord has promised to anyone who comes to Him, "I will never leave you or abandon you." (Hebrews 13:5) Why don't you come to Jesus to share in this truth that is promised to all people? The Lord is waiting for you.