

# “The Greatest Stories Ever Told”

*“and He spake many things unto them in parables...” Matthew 13:3*

## Guided Growth with Pastor Keith @ CBC Sunday, Oct 6<sup>th</sup> AM

The parables of Mt. 13 provide insight into the Kingdom of God. The first involves an Introduction as to how people actually become part of the Kingdom of God. (*Through receptive hearts*)

The first parable reveals how Satan seeks to inhibit God’s truth from taking root (and producing fruit) by either deception or competition. The next three (tares, mustard seed, leaven) reveals how Satan seeks to infiltrate God’s work (once it’s begun) in order to produce Contamination (1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9) and Confusion. (1 Cor 14:33) They reveal how Satan seeks to infiltrate God’s work (once it’s begun) producing Contamination (*1 Cor 5:6; Gal 5:9*) and Confusion. (*1 Cor 14:33*)

The first of these (Wheat and Tares) reveal that Satan plants False Christians. Mt 13:24-30; 36-43

The parable of the Mustard seed is related to this and focuses on the danger of “False Growth” because of the infiltration of tares.

## The danger of “False Growth”.

Jesus didn’t interpret this parable, so we must rely on His explanation of the 2 other parables.

**1. In the 1st parable we see the contrast and competition between the good seed (God’s Word) and the weeds (cares of this world.) Mt 13:22**

- A. The good seed is introduced into the field of weeds and rocks. (The world)
- B. The birds represent Satanic forces. (vs 19)

**2. In the 2nd parable we see that Satan infiltrates God’s field with his own counterfeits.**

- A. The tares are “the children of the wicked one” 38
- B. “The enemy that sowed them is the devil” 39
- C. They’re allowed to “grow together until the harvest” Vs 30

**3. In the 3rd parable we see the inevitable results of confusing Satan’s Tares for God’s Wheat.**

- A. God’s Kingdom (His Church) starts small. *“like to a grain of mustard seed”* vs 31
  - 1) Jesus spent 3 years ministering to thousands, but focused on 12 men.
  - 2) At the end, only 120 disciples obeyed his last instructions to wait and pray. Acts 1:15

**B. God’s Church would grow (in size and influence). Acts 2:41-42,47**

1) God’s focus would be on unity (Acts 4:32) without compromising purity.

- a) After the death of Ananias & Sappira: Acts 5:11-14 *“great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things...And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. And believers were the more added to the Lord.”*

2) Selfishness began to assert itself (Acts 6:1) but wisdom and Godliness prevailed. Vs 3-7

*“And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly;”*

3) Satan tried to intimidate the church through persecution (Acts 7)

- a) Stephen (a deacon) vs 10 ministered in such away that: *“they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”*

(1) They set up false witnesses (vs 13) and stoned him. (Acts 8:54-60)

b) But Satan's plan backfired. (Acts 8:1; 11:19) *"they were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word"*  
*"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church"* Tertullian 197 AD

C. Satan would eventually shift from persecution to infiltration. Mt 13:32 *"but when it is grown, it... becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches."*

If birds represent the "wicked one" in Vs 19, they represent him in Vs 32 as well. (see Jude 4)

1) This began early in the church. Acts 15:1; 2 Cor 11:14-15; 26

a) Some churches were vigilant and guarded against this. Rev. 2:2-6

b) Some Churches were careless. *Carelessness leads to corruption!* (Acts 20:28-30)

(1) Pergamos in Rev. 2:14,15

(2) Thyatira Rev 2:18-20,24

2) This infiltration accelerated when persecution ended with the conversion of the Emperor Constantine and the Edict of Milan in 313 AD.

a) Christianity became both protected and promoted.

b) Pagan priests "converted" to remain in business.

c) Pagan temples were converted to churches. (Roman Pantheon; Greek Acropolis; etc)

d) Apostles (saints) replaced "demigods" of the Roman Pantheon.

e) Pagan holidays became Christianized. (*Lupercalia* → *St. Valentines Day*,

*Eostre (Ishtar)* → *Easter*, *Samhain* → *"Hallowed Eve"*, *Saturnalia* became *Christmas*)

f) Pagan practices (beliefs) eventually became church doctrines. (Parable of Leaven!)

**CONCLUSION:** These infiltrations into the church eventually led to the Dark ages where the "Church" forbade the Bible and persecuted those who tried to preach it. (John 16:2)

➤ *When the Bible (God's Seed) was received, it led to the Reformation movements of the 1500's.*

➤ *This eventually led the Pilgrims to America in search of Religious Purity and liberty in 1620.*

➤ *Within a few years, this purity and liberty were compromised by the "Halfway Covenant" (1662)*

➤ *Jonathan Edwards (Stoddard's {who championed the covenant} Grandson) became his assistant (1727) and full Pastor in 1729. His preaching led to the 1st Great Awakening. (1730's)*

➤ *When he tried to withhold communion from the "tares" that had infiltrated his church, (1750) He was fired by a vote of 230 to 23!*

**Application:** *When the focus of the church becomes external numbers, instead of internal conversion and transformation, Satan has succeeded in building his nest (home) in the church "mustard tree", With predictable results!*

The church grows in numbers and influence, but God's Spirit is grieved, and we forfeit God's blessing. Mt 5:13; Lk 14:34,35

2 Tim 4:1-4 *"I charge thee therefore before God ... Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* Mythos: myths

**This explains the statistics shared last week.**

98% Christians don't reflect Christlike attitudes

63% don't believe that Jesus is the Son of the one true God.

58% believe all faiths teach equally valid truths.

51% don't believe Jesus rose from the dead.

68% don't believe that the Holy Spirit is a real entity.

65% don't believe Satan is real.

**an older friend asked him:** “Have you ever counted the cost of not following Him?”

**THE LIGHT:** The light is willing enough to enter the window of the soul when it is allowed admission. No man passes from his natural darkness into heavenly light without being aware that a great change has taken place. When the light first comes in, it reveals much that before was unperceived. If a room has been shut for a long time and kept in darkness, the light has a startling effect. With the light of a candle we cannot detect the dust, but if we open the shutters and draw the curtains, the light makes the mold and the dust very apparent. The first effect of the light of God in the soul is painfully unpleasant. It makes us loathe ourselves and wish we had never been born. Things grow worse and worse to our consciences as the light shines more and more. We would have every idol discovered and broken, and every dark chamber exposed to the sun. We must not keep the light out of any part of our nature. The light should be permitted to continue to enter our souls, and as it does, it gradually illuminates. Our will by nature prefers the darkness. We claim the right to act as we please. The light must continue to enter if our will is going to consent to change.

## **Opposition to the Kingdom ([Matt. 13:24-43](#))**

Satan opposes the kingdom by trying to snatch the Word from hearts ([Matt. 13:4, 19](#)). But when that fails, he has other ways of attacking God's work. These three parables reveal that Satan is primarily an *imitator*: He plants false Christians, he encourages a false growth, and he introduces false doctrine.

*The tares—false Christians* ([vv. 24-30, 36-43](#)). Satan cannot uproot the plants (true Christians), so he plants counterfeit Christians in their midst. In this parable, the good seed is not the Word of God. It represents people converted through trusting the Word. The field is not human hearts; the field is the world. Christ is sowing true believers in various places that they might bear fruit ([John 12:23-26](#)). But, wherever Christ sows a true Christian, Satan comes and sows a counterfeit.

We must beware of Satan's counterfeits. He has counterfeit Christians ([2 Cor. 11:26](#)) who believe a counterfeit Gospel ([Gal. 1:6-9](#)). He encourages a counterfeit righteousness ([Rom. 10:1-3](#)), and even has a counterfeit church ([Rev. 2:9](#)). At the end of the age, he will produce a counterfeit Christ ([2 Thes. 2:1-12](#)).

We must also stay awake to make sure that Satan's ministers do not get into the true fellowship and do damage ([2 Peter 2](#); [1 John 4:1-6](#)). It is when God's people go to sleep that Satan works. Our task is not to pull up the false, but to plant the true. (This does not refer to discipline within the local church.) We are not detectives but evangelists! We must oppose Satan and expose his lies. But we must also sow the Word of God and bear fruit in the place where He has planted us.

What will happen to the tares? God will gather them together and burn them. It is interesting to see that some of this "bundling" is already going on as various religious groups merge and strive for union. Spiritual unity among true Christians is one thing, but religious uniformity among mere

professing Christians is quite another. It is difficult to tell the false from the true today; but at the end of the age, the angels will separate them.

***The mustard seed—false growth*** ([yv. 31-32](#)). In the East, the mustard seed symbolizes something small and insignificant. It produces a large plant, but not a "tree" in the strictest sense. However, the plant is large enough for birds to sit in the branches.

Since Jesus did not explain this parable, we must use what He did explain in the other parables to find its meaning. The birds in the Parable of the Sower represented Satan ([Matt. 13:19](#)). Passages like [Daniel 4:12](#) and [Ezekiel 17:23](#) indicate that a tree is a symbol of a world power. These facts suggest that the parable teaches an abnormal growth of the kingdom of heaven, one that makes it possible for Satan to work in it. Certainly "Christendom" has become a worldwide power with a complex organization of many branches. What started in a humble manner today boasts of material possessions and political influences.

Some make this parable teach the worldwide success of the Gospel. But that would contradict what Jesus taught in the first parable. If anything, the New Testament teaches a growing decline in the ministry of the Gospel as the end of the age draws near.

***The leaven—false doctrine*** ([y. 33](#)). The mustard seed illustrates the false *outward* expansion of the kingdom, while the leaven illustrates the *inward* development of false doctrine and false living. Throughout the Bible, leaven is a symbol of evil. It had to be removed from the Jewish homes during Passover ([Ex. 12:15-19](#); [13:7](#)). It was excluded from the sacrifices ([Ex. 34:35](#)), with the exception of the loaves used at the Feast of Pentecost ([Lev. 23:15-21](#)). But there the loaves symbolized Jews and Gentiles in the church, and there is sin in the church.

Jesus used leaven to picture hypocrisy ([Luke 12:1](#)), false teaching ([Matt. 16:6-12](#)), and worldly compromise ([Matt. 22:16-21](#)). Paul used leaven to picture carnality in the church ([1 Cor. 5:6-8](#)) as well as false doctrine ([Gal. 5:9](#)). Sin is like leaven (yeast): It quietly grows, it corrupts, and it "puffs up" ([1 Cor. 4:18-19](#); [5:2](#); [8:1](#)). It would seem that making the growth of the leaven a picture of the spread of the Gospel throughout the world would violate the meaning of this important symbol. It would also contradict the other parables.

Satan has worked hard to introduce false doctrine and false living into the ministry of the Word of God. From the very early days of the church, true believers have battled false doctrine and hypocrisy. How sad it is that some churches and schools that were once true to the Word have turned from the truth to fables. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" is sound counsel ([1 Thes. 5:21](#)).

The kingdom of heaven began with the sowing of the Word of God in the hearts of men. Much of the seed did not bear fruit; but some was fruitful. Satan opposed the work of God by sowing counterfeit Christians, by encouraging a false growth, and by introducing false doctrine. It would seem that Satan is winning! But the test is at *the end* of the age, not *during* the age.

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