

SHORTER PARABLES IN MATTHEW 13

(PART 2)

Jon Macon

Matthew chapter 13 contains two long parables, that of the sower (verses 3-23), and that of the wheat and tares (verses 24-30,36-43). There are also six shorter parables in the chapter. Previously, we looked closely at the parables of the mustard seed (Matt 13:31-32), the leaven (Matt 13:33), and the treasure (Matt 13:44). Let us now consider the final three shorter parables of Matthew 13.

The parable of the pearl

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it” (Matt 13:45-46). This parable teaches the same principle as the parable of the treasure that was hid in the field. The fact that they both teach a similar point is demonstrated by Jesus’ use of the word “again” at the beginning of the parable. “Again,” we must forsake everything in this world to gain eternal riches (Luke 14:33). This parable also emphasizes the effort that we must put forth to find the eternal treasures. Seeking diligently is a condition for finding the eternal riches of the kingdom of God (Psa 14:2; 34:10; 53:3; 69:32; 105:4; 119:2; Prov 2:1-6; 11:27; Matt 6:33; 7:7-8; Luke 11:9-10; 12:31; Acts 15:17; 17:26-27; Col 3:1; Heb 11:6,13-16; 13:14).

The parable of the net

In Matthew 13:47-50, Jesus taught, “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” This parable of the net “again” teaches one of the major points of the parable of the wheat and the tares. In this parable, Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like this net. This would indicate that, as in the parable of

SHORTER PARABLES IN MATTHEW 13

(PART 2)

(continued)

the wheat and tares, there is “every kind” within the Lord’s church. There is “good” and “bad,” “wicked” people and “righteous” people in the church. This again shows us that there will be unfaithful Christians. This parable is another excellent refutation of the false doctrine of “once saved always saved” (also known as the doctrine of “eternal security” or by the Calvinistic term “perseverance of the saints”). All “bad” things will be “cast away” by the Lord at the end of the world. All the wicked will be separated from the righteous (Matt 25:31-46), including unfaithful Christians (Matt 25:24-30). They will be cast into hell for eternity.

The parable of the householder

In Matthew 13:51, Jesus asked his disciples, “Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.” In the next verse, Jesus replied to them with another parable, “Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which brings forth out of his treasure things new and old.” In the context of this parable, Jesus is speaking about the things that his disciples understand. All Christians are “instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.” We must hear the gospel, believe it, and obey it in order to be a Christian in the first place (Rom 10:13-17; 1 Pet 1:22-25). In this respect, there are certain things that we have understood from “old.” “The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning” (1 John 2:7). There are many things that we have understood from the beginning of our Christian life, and we must continue to walk in that truth (2 John 5-6). But we should also be continuing to learn and understand more of God’s will every day. Our “inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor 4:16). No matter how much we understand, we know nothing yet as we ought to know (1 Cor 8:2). Therefore, Christians should be just like the householder who brings out of his treasure both old and new things.