

Message Two

**The Appearance of the Kingdom of the Heavens—
the Tares and the Great Tree**

Scripture Reading: Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43, 31-32;
Rev. 18:2; 21:9-11

- I. In the Gospel of Matthew, the Lord's teaching in chapters five through seven, His parables in chapter thirteen, and His prophecy in chapters twenty-four and twenty-five, when added together, unveil the entire situation of the kingdom of the heavens.**
- II. The parable of the tares reveals the establishment of the kingdom and its false constituents—13:24-30, 36-43:**
 - A. The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world, the good seed are the sons of the kingdom, and the tares, the false believers, are the sons of the evil one—vv. 37-38.
 - B. The kingdom of the heavens was established with the sons of the kingdom, the wheat, but the sons of the evil one, the tares, grew up to alter the situation:
 1. A difference has arisen between the kingdom of the heavens and its outward appearance—5:3; 13:24.
 2. The sons of the kingdom constitute the kingdom, and the sons of the evil one have formed the outward appearance of the kingdom, today's Christendom—v. 38.
 - C. Throughout the New Testament we see the growth and development of the tares—Acts 20:29-30; Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Gal. 2:4-5; Phil. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:14-15; Heb. 12:15; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 John 2:18-19; 2 John 7; Jude 4, 8-16; Rev. 2:2b.
 - D. In the eyes of God, the tares are exceedingly evil; the judgment upon the tares will be very serious because they have been confusing, frustrating, and damaging God's economy—Matt. 13:30, 40-42.
 - E. Satan sowed tares among the wheat to frustrate the life of the wheat from growing—vv. 25-30:
 1. The tares were sown by the enemy to frustrate the proper growth of the divine life in the believers (the wheat).

CRYSTALLIZATION-STUDY OUTLINES

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2. Although the growth of life of the wheat has been greatly frustrated by the tares, the wheat still grows with the divine life and produces the grain which is ground into fine flour to make a loaf for an offering to God for His enjoyment and satisfaction—v. 33; 1 Cor. 10:16-17.

III. In Matthew 13:31-32 we have a parable telling of the abnormal development of the outward appearance of the kingdom of the heavens:

- A. Satan is very subtle in changing the principle of life to make the mustard seed grow not according to its kind—v. 32:
 1. According to the law of God's creation, every plant must be according to its kind—Gen. 1:11-12.
 2. The mustard seed should become an herb to produce proper food for people, but Satan made it a tree to become a lodging place for so many birds (evil persons, spirits, and things)—Matt. 13:32.
 3. Because the nature of the mustard seed was changed, it is no longer an herb to feed people but a tree to lodge birds; this great tree is today's Christendom—cf. Dan. 4:4-26.
- B. The parable of the mustard seed corresponds to the third of the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3—the church in Pergamos, which signifies the church in union with the world and becoming monstrously great—2:12-17:
 1. The church, according to its heavenly and spiritual nature, should be like the mustard herb, sojourning on the earth; however, with its nature changed, the church became deeply rooted and settled in the earth as a tree, flourishing with its enterprises as the branches to lodge many evil persons and things—Matt. 13:31-32.
 2. Today's Christendom is a great tree with many sinful persons and evil spirits lodging in its branches.
 3. To have the element of the great tree is to desire to be great and have a nice façade.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Message Two (continuation)

- C. The great tree in Matthew 13 will be fully developed into Babylon the Great, which is full of leaven, pollution, corruption, and all kinds of evil things—Rev. 18:2:
 - 1. The reality of the kingdom of the heavens will consummate with a city—the New Jerusalem; the appearance of the kingdom of the heavens will also consummate with a city—Babylon the Great—21:9-11.
 - 2. The New Jerusalem, God’s building, is holy, and Babylon the Great, Satan’s building, is great; God does not want something great—He wants something holy.

IV. The picture of Christendom in Matthew 13, given in a prophetic way, unveils the real situation of today’s deformed and degraded Christianity:

- A. As a religious system, Christianity is deformed from the form of the revelation in the holy Word and is also degraded—Eph. 3:3-11; 2 Tim. 2:19-21:
 - 1. The deformed and degraded Christianity has left the God-ordained way for carrying out the New Testament economy—Rev. 2:14-15; 3:1-2.
 - 2. This degraded religious system takes the natural, human, traditional, cultural, and religious way.
 - 3. The religious system of today’s Christendom kills the living members of the Body of Christ and annuls the organic function of the members of Christ.
 - 4. The deformed and degraded Christianity forfeits the proper church life, not caring for the building up of the Body of Christ—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:27.
- B. We should stay away from the practice of deformed and degraded Christianity and come back to the divine revelation for the Lord’s recovery—Matt. 16:18.
- C. We need to come back to the God-ordained way to practice the New Testament economy so that God can operate in His Divine Trinity to dispense His triune being into us that we may be filled and saturated with the Divine Being to become His corporate expression—1 Tim. 1:4; Eph. 3:16-17a; 4:4-6, 11-16.