

The House That Is Christendom 2 Timothy 2:19-21

Turn to: **2Timothy 2:19-21**

Our verses read....

19 Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: "The Lord knows those who are His," [Our problem is that we do not always know who are His] and, "Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity [those that are His will take heed here]."

20 **But** in a great house [The House That Is Christendom] there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

-Paul here uses a most familiar figure of speech, a 'House'.

-The word is used 95 times in the NT mostly used of actual houses

-Paul compares our earthly temporary body- 'a tent' to our permanent heavenly body- 'a house'

-Paul uses 'house' here in 2Tim. 2:20 'spiritually'

-Peter also uses 'house' spiritually in **1Peter 2:5** where he says this: **you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house**, [what kind of house is this Peter?] **a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.**

-Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected is the chief cornerstone of this house

-We learn from Paul that the foundation of the house is connected and abiding in the cornerstone....

-.... according to **Ephesians 2:20** the Apostles and Prophets are the foundation connected to the cornerstone

-**Hebrews 3:4-6** tells us that the builder is God Himself

This is a house that has everything going for it:

-God is its builder

-Christ is the chief cornerstone

-Built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets

-Newly Transformed Living stones making up its walls

-**And Yet** in this house there are vessels of gold and silver and wood and clay

-Some for honor some for dishonor

-With this pedigree of builders and construction workers how can this be?

-In a word: 'Sin'. Sin that is still with & in us & desiring to control us even though we are eternally saved!

-What we have before us here and around us is, **The House That Is Christendom**

-Right here, right now we have vessels of honor and dishonor

-Paul was declared by Jesus to be a chosen 'vessel' of His in Acts 9:15

-How can there be vessels of honor and dishonor here, in the church that is associated with the name of Jesus Christ?

-The presence of sin in our mortal and corrupt bodies even after salvation,

-make us potentially ripe to be vessels of honor or dishonor

-Left unchecked and undenied our sinful natures can lead to acts of dishonor

-Sin allowed, sin unchecked can lead to a bad church experience

-That is why so many of us here have had hurtful church experiences.

How Does Christendom's Churches Hurt its Members?

- The church is hurt when sin is left unchecked in its midst, see **1Corinthians 5:1-6**
- The church is hurt by the leaven of false teaching that is rampant thruout Christendom
- The church is hurt by not recognizing false teaching, because so many in the pews are not Bereans....
- ... And do or cannot judge false teaching from the true
- The church is hurt by not teaching the whole council of God ...
- ... leaving its members ignorant of and doubting God for what He has allowed to happen to them?
- The church is hurt by putting unscriptural traditions before the Word of God as final authority
- The church is hurt by not denying ourselves and serving each other and not ourselves
- The church is hurt by making the worship the prime criteria of whether they like the church or not
- The church is hurt by failing and fallen leaders... I've been involved with the fall of four pastors.

Was Jesus Aware that churches called by His name would be filled with vessels of Honor and dishonor?

- Yes He was.
- He described this Church Age and what it would be like, not according to His desire, ...
- ... but according to how it would actually be.
- He did so in word pictures
- Not only does Jesus give us word pictures of the honorable and the dishonorable in Christendom
- But we Christendom unfold beginning the Book of Acts and especially in the letters to the churches

-It helps to understand the state of the church today

- that nearly every letter written to actual physical churches or to leaders of local churches...
- That every one of them deal to some extent with issues of failing, sinning Christendom
- It helps to understand that there is nothing going in Christendom that was not addressed in the NT

-It helps that in chapters 2 and 3 of The Revelation, dictated by Jesus some 60 years after His ascension

- That the Lord of the Church gives public report cards to seven actual churches
- Five of them He told to repent of their particular sins
- That means that over 70% of the churches written to had to repent, to lesser or greater degrees!
- Two did not, they were commended and encouraged

-It helps that those 7 seven churches are models of the churches on earth today!

- We find them represented today throughout the world and thruout church history

How Do we define this word, Christendom?

"The one word that best defines and describes the Mystery Kingdom, though it is not perfect, is 'Christendom', and not the purer word, 'Christianity'. The term 'Christendom' applies everywhere in the world where the belief in Jesus is somehow affirmed, rightly or wrongly, in orthodoxy or heretically. The parables of Matthew 13 describe conditions on earth and God's rule while the King is absent from the earth and is in Heaven. The Mystery Kingdom, 'Christendom' includes the time between Acts two and the return of Jesus Christ to the earth."

Turn to Matthew 13 and let's look briefly at Jesus' characterizations

- ... of the Mystery Kingdom of Heaven on earth, that we call the Church Age.
- This Church Age comes after His perfect cornerstone work
- of being crucified, buried and resurrected.

Some Background to Matthew 13

- Following the official, national rejection of Jesus as Messiah on the basis of demon possession in ch. 12
- We come to chapter 13 (its partial parallels are in Mark 4 and Luke 8)
- I will read the chapter with some brief expansions as we go
- But we cannot stay too long in this chapter
- For an in depth exposition of these verses listen to Pastor Dave's teachings on Matthew on our website
- Keep in mind what you are going to hear is not how most churches teach chapter 13
- But let's see what the Word says!

13:1 On the same day [as their national rejection of Him] Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat [the position of a teacher, teaching]; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower [deliberately] went out to sow. 4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth [there was life!]. 6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns [Luke adds 'sprang up', thus they were alive], and the thorns sprang up and choked them [the thorns were awaiting the seeds growth].
v.8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Why He spoke to the multitudes in Parables

v.10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**, [In Mark 4:11 He calls it the 'Mystery Kingdom of God']

- Jesus is going to tell us 'what' the Mystery Kingdom is, but we want to know
- ... Where is the Mystery Kingdom of Heaven?
- John the Baptist, Jesus, and the Disciples all proclaimed that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, at that time
- It was here on earth, and Jesus was going to reveal its mysteries, hidden from the Old Testament
- The Mystery Kingdom starts with the sower Jesus, add to that His disciples and followers
- Starting in Israel and then we will find it all over the world.... but we digress

What does Jesus mean by mystery kingdom?

Vs. 34-35 He tells us: He was, prior to v.34 revealing the mysteries that 'is' this kingdom in parables

-Jump down to v.34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, **35** that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."

- This mystery kingdom has been kept secret since the foundations of the world
- Kept secret even from the OT, but now He will reveal it

Back up to v.10 ... but to them [those that rejected Him as Messiah on the basis of demon possession] **it has not been given.** 12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him [think 70 AD].

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

- In **Romans 11:25** Paul explains this partial blindness as 'blindness in part',
- Jesus also pictured this partial blindness in **Mark 8:24** when He partially healed a man, then asked what he saw and he said, 'I see men as trees walking'

What will this partial blindness brought on by their rejection of Him look like?

v.14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.'

But to those who follow Him as their Messiah....

16 "But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 for assuredly, I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.

18 "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:

-According to **Mark 4:13** understanding the Parable of the Sower is the key to understanding all subsequent parables.

-The common motifs used in this parable are explained and interpreted by Jesus

-His keys to understanding these parables is why we differ from the common interpretations of these parables

Hear His Explanation

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom [the seed sown is the Word of God], and does not understand it [and therefore does not believe it], then the wicked one [the birds here then are evil] comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart [soil is the heart, this heart remains for now in unbelief]. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles [this is the believer who has life, but becomes an environment dependent believer, because he has no deep roots].

V.22 Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke [out] the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

-The purpose of the seed, the Word of God, is twofold: to bring forth life and to enable that life to bear fruit

Turn to **Mark 4:26-29 for the second parable, the Parable of the Seed Growing of Itself,**

26 And He said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground, 27 and should sleep by night and rise by day, and the seed should sprout and grow, he himself does not know how.

-The sower here is not needed to energize or make the seed grow and have life, give life and bear fruit

-The Gospel and the Word is the power of God unto salvation and fruitfulness all by itself!

v. 28 For the earth yields crops by itself: first the blade, then the head, after that the full grain in the head.

-It grows gradually over time with a desire to not only bring life but fruitfulness

v. 29 But when the grain ripens, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Notes for the Reader

-it makes two points. *First*: the seed sown will spring to life of its own accord; the seed has an inner life-energy, so that it will inexplicably produce regeneration. *Second*: the springing to life does not depend on the sower; once he has sown the seed, there is nothing more that he can do. The gospel itself is the power of God that produces regeneration.

Tares Sown Amongst Wheat

Back to Matt. 13:24 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; 25 but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. 26 But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. 27 So the servants of the owner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' 28 He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' The servants said to him, 'Do you want us then to go and gather them up?' 29 But he said, 'No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn." ' "

Skipping to v. 36 we get Jesus' explanation of this parable

v.36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." 37 He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. 38 The field is the [occupied] world, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. 39 The enemy who sowed them [imitation sowing, amongst the good seed] is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age [at His second coming Matthew 25:31-46 covers this] and the reapers are the angels. 40 Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age [the Mystery Kingdom Age, the Church Age]. 41 The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend ['skandalon', all that stumbles], and those who practice lawlessness, 42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!

-The essential character of each type of seed sown can only be known by fruitfulness or fruitlessness.

Back to v.31 Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, 32 which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest [make their home] in its branches."

-The Mystery Kingdom will assume huge outer proportions due to abnormal growth

-This monstrosity will become a resting place for evil birds.

-Within this monstrosity of Christendom, there will be false teachers who will claim to believe in Jesus

-... while not believing all or some of His essentials, either His deity or His humanity or the completeness of His work on the cross

-All while under the umbrella of 'Christendom'.

V.33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven [which is evil teachings and or sin], which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal [a fellowship offering] till it was all leavened."

Notes for the Reader

-The fifth parable is the Parable of the Leaven (Mat. 13:33).

-A woman, when used symbolically, often symbolizes a spiritual or religious entity.

-This could be used positively or negatively.

-On the positive side, there is Israel as the Wife of Jehovah, and the Church as the Bride of Messiah.

-On the negative side there is the Jezebel of Revelation 2:20 and the Great Harlot of Revelation 17:1-8.

-Here, woman is used negatively and refers to a false religious system.

-False religious elements will be introduced into the Mystery Kingdom resulting in spiritual fornication.

- Leaven is the symbol of sin (1 Cor. 5:6–8), and particularly in Matthew, the sin of false teaching (Mat. 16:6, 11–12). Thus, false teaching is introduced into the Mystery Kingdom.
- The three measures of meal is a fellowship offering, meaning here that sin and false teaching will be in the fellowship of the kingdom

Move down to v.44

44 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has [Jesus gave all] and buys that field [the field we know is the world].

- The 'treasure' is a symbol of Israel (Ex. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; Ps. 135:4).
- Here we differ from traditional church teachings.
- The 'field' is the world per Jesus and only Jesus is able to buy the field

Notes for the Reader

- The sixth parable is the Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Mat. 13:44).
- The point of this parable is that while most of Israel rejected the Messiah, nevertheless, God will always have a remnant from Israel in the field, in the world.

v.45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, 46 who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it [Jesus bought the pearl with His life].

- Pearls are a gentile gem from unclean oysters, thus speaking of gentiles
- Thus we see in these two parables the salvation provided for both the Jew and Gentile

Notes for the Reader

- While the Bible reveals that the treasure represents Israel, it does not state anywhere exactly what the pearl represents when it is used symbolically.
- Knowing that Christendom includes both Jews and Gentiles,
- The treasure represents the Jews, so it is natural that the pearl would represent the Gentiles.
- Finally, the pearl comes from the oyster, which itself was unclean in the Law of Moses but made clean by the Law of Messiah.
- The first point made is that there will also be salvation among the Gentiles.
- One of the primary purposes of the Church Age is to call out from among the Gentiles a people for His name (Acts 15:14), and this is to continue until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in (Rom. 11:25). This is indeed pictured by this parable.

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea [which represents the gentile world] and gathered some of every kind, 48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.

49 So it will be at the end of the age [the Church Age]. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, 50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Notes for the Reader

- The sea, again, represents the Gentiles, and the point of the net is that the Mystery Kingdom will end with the Judgment of the Gentiles,
- With the righteous brought into the Messianic Kingdom and the unrighteous excluded.
- This is the same as the Judgment of the Gentiles in Matthew 25:31–46.

v. 51 Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old." 53 Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there.

-this teaches that some aspects of the Mystery Kingdom have similarities with the other facets of God's Kingdom Program, i.e. The Mosaic Age and the Kingdom Age

-There are other aspects are brand new, never found before.

Summary of the Nine Parables

First parable, The Sower: there will be the sowing of the Word of God throughout this age and there would be four responses.

Second parable, The Seed Growing of Itself: this seed which has been sown will have an inner-life energy so that it will spring to life of its own accord.

Third parable, The Tares Amongst: there will be a false counter sowing amongst the good seed, right near the beginning.

The next two parables are the results of the third parable

Fourth parable, The Mustard Seed: the Mystery Kingdom will assume huge outer proportions until it becomes a monstrosity and a dwelling place for evil.

Fifth parable, Leaven: The Mystery Kingdom will be marked by inward doctrinal corruption and sin.

The next two parables are the results of the first and second parables

Sixth parable, The Treasure in the Purchased Field: nevertheless, the Lord will gain a remnant from Israel, which rejected Him as a nation.

Seventh parable, The Pearl of Great Price: God will also gain a people from among the Gentiles, but at great expense to Himself

Eighth parable, The Net: The Mystery Kingdom will end with the judgment of the Gentiles.

-the unrighteous will be excluded from the Messianic Kingdom, and the righteous will be taken into the Promised Messianic Age.

Ninth parable, The Householder: The Mystery Kingdom has both similarities and dissimilarities with the other dispensations of God's Kingdom Program,

-i.e. The Dispensation of the Law and the Kingdom Age to come

Applications: Christendom and The Church

-We are Christendom. Most of us here are Christian and are in Christ, in Heaven, BUT not all.

-Christendom and THE Church within Christendom on earth is made up of sinners

-Many of the sinners within earthly Christendom are eternally saved by grace thru faith

-Most of us adhere to the GODvernment of Jesus Christ, here and out there, Monday thru Sunday

-But not all of us!

-Some in Christendom are just sinners, awaiting salvation or they are awaiting sentencing!

Christendom does not exist in Heaven

-Only the spiritual church in Christ Jesus is there from this the Church Age, along with Old Testament Saints

-In Heaven there will not be 4 kinds of hearts only pure hearts, no tares mixed in with the wheat,

-No monstrous and evil mustard trees of Christendom organizations

- No leaven of sin or false teaching mixed within the fellowship
- The Treasure and The Pearl will be one in Christ

What are The Governing Authorities in Christendom?

- Much of Christendom denies the inerrancy of God's Word
- And those that do not hold to the Bible as final authority ...
- ... become their own final authority for all things called Christian by them
- Every Christ named or Christ included cult is in Christendom and have their own governing authorities.
- Often those governing authorities are found other writings outside of the Word of God
- Even within them there is probably treasure and or pearls, ...
- Jesus told the church at Sardis in Rev. 3:1 that, **'you have a name but you are dead'**... in v.4 Jesus adds, **'You have a few names even in Sardis who have not defiled their garments'**
- In His scathing report card to the church at Thyatira He says this to the faithful few, **'and to the rest in Thyatira, as many as do not have this [false] doctrine, who have not known the depths of Satan, as they say, I will put on you no other burden.'**
- who have not known the depths of Satan's false teaching in their 'Christendom Church'!

Heaven's Christians who are on earth are not sinless

- ... While in a salvation state on earth
- BUT repentance is part of our daily bread
- Especially as we judge our false or evil thoughts, attitudes, emotions and unbeliefs by our final authority
- ...the Word of God
- Portions of Christendom are often legalistic in order to control behavior ...
- ... Instead of being controlled by the love of Christ and the Word
- Some of Christendom does not stop leaven from growing but rationalizes it by its essential false doctrines
- Some of Christendom allows the culture to leaven the church and not the church being salt to the culture

Christendom is Often Material and Emotional

- Christianity is spiritual but not to the neglect of physical needs
- Portions of Christendom often focusses on the importance and grandeur of a building
- This part of Christendom will say: 'Surely God is in this place'!
- Many in Christendom twist the written Word to rationalize certain behaviors or church practices
- Repentance is not a part of their daily bread
- Christendom often focuses on money and appearance
- Christendom is often a spectator sport and on Monday the spectators become Sermon Critics

CHRISTianity focuses on the heart's state:

- Is it rocky, shallow, full of thorns or deep soiled and fruitful?
- CHRISTianity focusses on good works because we are saved, ...
- ... While many in Christendom focus on works in order to be saved or to make sure you are saved!
- Neither Christendom nor the true Church within can save you
- Only faith in the crucified risen Christ can do that

Is there any hope for all Christendom?

- God loves all of Christendom and non-Christendom
- God wants Christ to be your Lord and Savior and not your local church
- God wants Tares to become Wheat
- God wants Leaven to be remove without condemnation, motivated by love of Christ Crucified

- God wants shallow, environmental Christians to grow deep roots, to grow up and be fruitful
- God wants the mustard tree to be a bush that is on fire and not a tree with evil birds lodging in it
- God wants Satan's birds out of His humble mustard bush
- Besides birds will not reside in a humble ground hugging bush, its not safe or comfortable for them
- God wants the Treasure, His chosen people to receive their Messiah and be one with His people who are the gentile pearl
- God wants us to be patient with the tares and those who have been hurt by 'churchianity'
- God wants His word to be central and the overall authority for all things concerning our corporate and individual lives

How do we know this?

Because all of the letters in the NT are corrective except for three: To the church Philippi, To the Church at Smyrna and to the church at Philadelphia

We started with **2Timothy 2:20**

But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor.

- Jesus was not prophesying in Matt. 13 that He was going to create Christendom as it is today,
- But he was letting us know what His Church of Sinners, many saved, would be like throughout Church history and today.
- God is in the business of keeping honorable vessels humble and usable
- He humble dishonorable vessels and make them into honorable vessels in His sight-if they are willing
- He will not violate your free will,
- But He will allow or execute judgments to follow your decisions
- Whether you are righteous or unrighteous
- But He is long, long suffering and forbearing, desiring all to come to repentance
- The Apostles never set out make sure that we have a certain mix of the false to grow together with the righteous,
- That is the work of the enemy
- Because of sin we have both today and because of the cross the dishonorable can made honorable!
- Does Christendom have a bad witness?
- Often the answer is Yes!
- But Jesus does not have a witness and He is the Truth and the Holy Spirit says this to all of us in

2Corinthians 13:8

For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth

- God will accomplish His work in spite of bad witnesses, let us be useful for the truth

Amen!

Let us pray!

The Sunday version of these notes will appear online after this message is posted on our Website

