

The Promise of His Coming Part 2

Read by Rodd Sacchi Sunday February 22, 2009

(Adapted from John Herbert's notes)

1). 2Peter 3:1

Beloved, I now write to you this second epistle (in both of which I stir up your pure minds by way of reminder), 2 that you may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior, 3 knowing this first: that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, 4 and saying, "Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation."

2). We had discovered last week a parallel between the actions of the Children of Israel when Moses went onto the mountain to receive the Commandments from God and the actions of the Church after Christ ascended into heaven to await the time for His return.

- In both instances we saw a questioning of the promise to return, leading to a move towards idolatry and harlotry that was endorsed and even encouraged by the leaders of the people.
- Exodus 32:1b *...as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."*

3). In respect of the Church this situation is the outworking of what we know as apostasy – a standing away from the truth. Which would ultimately result in the appearance of the ‘scoffers’ in our 2 Peter scripture.

- These same people are also spoken of in Jude where they are referred to as ‘mockers’
- ‘Scoffers’ and ‘mockers’ both being a translation of the same Greek word – *empaiktes* – to deride or belittle (mock)
- Jude 1:17 *But you, beloved, remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ: 18 how they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts.*

4). The appearance of the ‘mockers’ was something that the apostles had already spoken about.1

- 1Timothy 4:1 *Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.*
- 2Timothy 4:1 *I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: 2 Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. 3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; 4 and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.*
- 2Thessalonians 2:1 *Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, 2 not to be soon shaken in mind or*

troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. 3 Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition,

5). It is departing from the faith, which is departing from ‘the promise of His coming’ that has resulted in the present Laodicean condition of the church – a Church that the Lord describes in - Revelation 3:17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

- Now we will understand that departing from the faith is not just a denial of the literal return of Christ, but a standing away from those things associated with His return. Replacing the evidence of scripture with the fables of men.
- This must of necessity include the coming Judgment at His Judgment Seat – an event many Christians accept, but they do not accept, despite the clear teaching of scripture, that there will be any negative consequences for Christians at this time – examples. (Wise and Foolish virgins etc)
- Included in this would be the reason for this Judgment – to identify those who will be the Bride of Christ who will rule with Him during the
- Millennial Kingdom. There is throughout Christendom the teaching that all Christians are the Bride of Christ, again contrary to the clear teaching of scripture – examples. (Ruth and Orpah – Rebekah – from Adam’s side)
- There is the denial of a literal Millennial Kingdom – many believing that the Kingdom is here and now – and of course the erroneous teaching that being saved and entering the Kingdom is one and the same thing. Denying our 2 Thessalonians 2 scripture – examples (It is not good for the man to be alone)
- Being found worthy to have a position within the coming Kingdom is inextricably linked to the salvation of the soul. Not only is this teaching generally ignored, but is completely denied by those who teach that man is a two part being and not a three part being as scripture teaches – examples (Let us make man...) - 1Thessalonians 5:23 *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- And so we could go on – but what should be obvious to us is that departing from the faith has to do with a rejection of the gospel of the glories of Christ – in other words it is an attack on the Word of the Kingdom, a denial of the whole purpose of God.
- Even though the preaching of the gospel of grace is a legitimate scriptural mandate, stopping there is a denial of the purpose for our salvation and as such is a denial of the Lord who bought us.

6). Now in these last days the ‘mockers’ are not giving a false message as a premeditated act but they are the result of a process that has been going on for nearly 2000 years which did begin with a deliberate, premeditated denial of the truth.

7). It is a process that the Lord Himself spoke of in the Matthew 13 parables.

- Before we look at this specifically, let’s make sure our foundation with regards to these parables is properly laid
 - There is a sequence of 7 parables given in Matthew 13 – 7 being a number of completions showing that this is a complete picture of what

is being presented. They come after an event in Matthew 12 where the Scribes and Pharisees attribute the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, precipitating the removal of the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens from Israel. The message then given in the parables that follow is for the church, which will be primarily Gentile, shown by His going to the sea.³

- Jesus gives these parables in the hearing of two groups of people – His disciples and the multitude.
- Note what He says to His disciples in response to their question
- Matthew 13:10 *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, but to them it has not been given.*
- And we will remember that a parable, a transliteration of the Greek word ‘*parabole*’ which means to lay alongside. It is a way of teaching that sets a foundation in place and then adds more information in succeeding parables alongside that already given to build up a complete picture.
- The foundation is laid with the parable of the Sower, which according to the Lord is about - Matthew 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom.....*
- All that then follows – the parable of the Wheat and Tares, the parable of the Mustard Seed, the parable of the Leaven and so on all provide additional information concerning anyone hearing the word of the kingdom.
- In fact this parabolic sequence provides a complete dispensational history of the Church in respect of the word of the kingdom – from its inception to the judgment of Christians in relation to it at the Judgment Seat.
- If we understand the Matthew 13 parables we will understand exactly what has happened to that which was the central message of the Church at its beginning.

8). Let us be in no doubt about how central this message was – the message of the Kingdom was preached to a redeemed people, Israel – the only ones who could receive it, by the forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist

- Matthew 3:1 *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!"*
- After John’s imprisonment it was the message that Christ preached
- Matthew 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*
- In fact according to scripture it is the very reason Jesus was sent
- Luke 4:43 *but He said to them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent."*
- It would be good for us to remember that everything Jesus said, every sign, wonder and miracle He performed was in relation to the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to a redeemed people, which of itself was in fulfillment of OT prophecy that we can trace back to the promised redeemer of Genesis 3:15 – the very reason for the restoration of the heavens and the earth beginning in Genesis 1:2b.
- It was the same message with the same audience that He sent out the 12 to preach - Matthew 10:5 *These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go*

into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

- *7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'*
- *And the 70 other disciples - Luke 10:1 After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.....8 "Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. 9 "And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'*
- *It was the focus of Christ's post resurrection ministry – Acts 1:3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*
- *It was the message of the early Church - Acts 8:12 But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.*
- *Acts 14:22 strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God."*
- *And the message of Paul - Acts 20:25 "And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, will see my face no more.*

9). And yet it is a message, as we have already seen by the Holy Spirit through the pen of Paul that would be departed from, which brings us back to the Matthew 13 parables.

10). In amongst those who heard, understood and acted upon the word of the kingdom, those sown in good ground in the Parable of the Sower, the enemy of our soul placed those who would apostatize from that word – Matthews 13:36 *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 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 is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.*

- *Now these are not the unsaved and they are not devil worshippers, they are born again believers whose actions make them 'sons of the wicked one' rather than sons of the kingdom'*
- *And their actions, in respect of standing away from the word of the kingdom is shown to us in the parable of the leaven.*
- *Matthew 13:33 Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."*
 - *Leaven in scripture is always a picture of sin and corruption. We see this in the picture of the feast of unleavened bread given to Israel after the Passover - Exodus 12:15 'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses.*
 - *from the mouth of Jesus - Matthew 16:6 Then Jesus said to them, "Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees."12 Then they understood that He did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and Sadducees.*

- And in the Epistles - 1Corinthians 5:8 *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.*
- (3) is the number of Divine perfection and meal is that which was used to make bread, giving us a picture of the Divinely perfect Bread of Life, the Word of God, specifically the Word of the Kingdom – the subject of our parables.
- Into that Divinely perfect word corruption was added until the whole word concerning the message of the kingdom has become completely corrupted. Just what the evidence of scripture has shown us.

11). But an obvious question would be, ‘Why would someone who has come into a mature understanding of the Kingdom, choose to stand away from it, deliberately teaching a false doctrine?’

12). Thankfully scripture gives us the answer - Jude 1:11 *Woe to them! For they have gone in the way of Cain, have run greedily in the error of Balaam for profit, and perished in the rebellion of Korah.*

13). Here is our explanation

- The way of Cain – Genesis 4:3 *And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.* Cain you will remember did not act in faith in response to what God had said about bringing an offering, but instead chose to do his own thing so to speak.
- And so with our apostates – they chose not to act in faith in response to that which God had said, but chose to act according to their own desires. Cain killing Abel would give us a picture of the man of flesh overcoming the man of spirit in this respect and would equate the actions of the apostates with the rebellious actions of Israel of whom Cain is a type.
 - The error of Balaam for profit – Numbers 22:12 *And God said to Balaam, "You shall not go with them; you shall not curse the people, for they are blessed."*
 - Balaam you will remember was hired by Balak to curse the Children of Israel and we see here the use of a God given gift being used for personal gain, irrespective of the consequences. When this failed we see Balaam instructing Balak in how to assimilate Israel into the nations that surrounded them, thereby turning them to idolatry so as not to lose his financial gain. It is easy to see the church enmeshed in the things of the world and the huge financial profit there is for those who find the right product to market.
 - Exclusionism
 - The book, the study book, the prayer journal, the dvd, the cd, the birthday cards, the mugs, key rings, tee shirts, hats etc.
 - The minister to come to Cayman Brac – 500 people / \$5000
 - We find Balaam again mentioned in - Revelation 2:14 *"But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam,*
- c). The rebellion of Korah – Numbers 16:2 *and they rose up before Moses with some of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, representatives of the congregation, men of renown. 3 They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You take too much upon yourselves,*
- It was Korah, with other prominent leaders of Israel, who rose up against Moses and Aaron in order to take the priesthood from them. In this we can see the division of the church as the apostates sought to take believers away from the truth, forming their own

priesthood so to speak. In so doing we can also see them trying to replace the One whom Moses typifies, the Lord Jesus Christ.

14). In essence then throughout we see those who came to understand the Kingdom who then chose to live by their carnal nature instead of following the Spirit, who changed and corrupted the word to suit their own ends –

Acts 20:29 *"For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 "Also from among yourselves men⁷ will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

- Jude 1:19 *These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit.*
- 2Peter 2:14 *having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices, and are accursed children.*
- We will notice here in Our 2 Peter scripture that they ‘entice unstable souls’ – the unstable soul would be the one not firmly established in the word of truth who could be blown to and fro by every wind of doctrine.
- Hebrews 6:19 *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil,*
- It is the hope of our inheritance in the kingdom that keeps us stable. Without that hope and all it entails our souls would be headed for shipwreck.
- And as a result of the apostates corrupted message this is exactly what has happened and continues to happen - 2Peter 2:1 *But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words;*

15). This is exactly where we now find ourselves – the corrupted message introduced by the apostates has now become the norm within the church, so much so that the way of truth is called blasphemy and heresy. The leaven has done its work.

16). The encouragement for us - 2Peter 3:17 *You therefore, beloved, since you know this beforehand, beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked; 18 but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.*

17). I am so thankful for the degree to which we have become established, but we cannot afford to sit back, we must continue to be focused and vigilant, remembering that the ministry of the word here at Cornerstone is not just for us alone but also for those who are at a distance from us. Who, not having the blessing of gathering together as we have, may be more vulnerable to deceptive words.⁸

- We are rapidly approaching a time when we will not just have to send out DVDs, CDs and Bible Studies, but also people, in the likeness of the ministries of Paul, Timothy, Barnabus and Silas et al, to strengthen and encourage the brethren wherever they may be.
- We have an incredible challenge and a weighty responsibility for whatever time remains to us. To Him be the Glory.⁹