

PROPHECY OVERVIEW
"Part I: Wise, Effective Living Between Now And The Rapture"
(Matt. 13:27-52 with 2 Tim. 3:1-5a)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

Our world is sinking ever deeper into spiritual darkness, and observing that slippage can really discourage us. Consider these facts:

(1) After last Sunday's sermon in which we mentioned the moral failure of our nation's President, Ray Baldwin told me how he could see how easy it will be for the world to follow the coming anti-christ! His point is well-taken: if a local school principal had been charged with **half** of what our President has **admitted** doing in the oval office complex, he would have lost his job long ago; however, most Americans feel the President can keep on functioning as our leader! It is simply amazing!

Sincere **Christians** in the Southern Baptist Convention voted for the man in the belief that since he was a Southern Baptist, they were electing an **exemplary Christian**! Now congressmen are reportedly getting calls from disillusioned constituents who, while **weeping** over the phone, are asking for the President's impeachment!

(2) On any number of occasions, I have gone to funerals in our area that were conducted by other ministers whose churches belong to a denomination that at **one** time was formed to stand for the **truth**. Yet, though the sanctuary or funeral home chapel was packed with people who might otherwise never hear the Gospel, the minister, in contrast to Ephesians 2:8-9, said that the deceased was now in heaven for living a decent life, not for believing in Christ as his Savior! I have sometimes fought discouragement over how **far** such churches in Christendom have **DEPARTED** from teaching the Gospel of Christ!

(3) On page 55 of the current Christian Book Distributors catalogue, an ad runs for a book on "The Mysterious Yeshua Codes." Its author claims that the Hebrew name for Jesus, Yeshua is hidden in **practically** every messianic Old Testament prophecy. The problem is, he uses the **allegorical** method of interpretation to arrive at a **mystical** conclusion **opposite** normal literal interpretation! This departs from basic Protestant methods used by the reformers, and leads to all sorts of imaginative errors! Yet, **mixed in** with lots of **good** books is this one that counters **basic** truths on even we are to **interpret** the Bible!

Well, how do we function with motivation and enjoy God's blessing in a world that seems to be slipping lower into darkness?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "I am concerned at the decline in law and decency in today's world! Is there something WONDERFUL I can live for NOW?!"

I. Matthew 13 offers insight for living until Christ's return to earth:

- A. Matt. 11-12 records Christ's rejection by Israel, Walv., Matt., p. 95f.
- B. Thus, Matthew 13 gives a **revised direction** to believers as follows:
 1. Jesus gave parables in Mtt. 13 since Israel **rejected** Him, 13:10-15.
 2. So, as Mtt. 13:47-50 NIV **ends** these series of Matthew 13 parables by predicting Christ' Second Coming, these parables foretell things that occur **between** Christ's **rejection** and **Second Coming**.

II. We view the Mtt. 13 parables to see how to live effectively TODAY:

- A. Trend One - The Parable of the Sower shows people will respond to God's Word **various** ways because of various degrees of openness to God, producing varying **degrees** of **spiritual growth**, Mtt. 13:18-23.
- B. Trend Two - The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares shows that Satan will take **advantage** of men responding **weakly** to Scripture teaching and of **leaders** being **irresponsible** (13:25a) to plant **unbelievers** in groups **among weak believers**, Mtt. 13:36-43. God will not remove Satan's folk from groups to avoid harming **weak** believers, 13:27-30.
- C. Trend Three - Christ predicted in the Parable of the Mustard Seed that these groups would enjoy **great external growth** unchecked **even** by **Satan**, for they would **take in** Satan's **people**, 13:31-32; Lk. 13:10-19.
- D. Trend Four - Christ predicted in the Parable of the Leaven that the next step would be for **false doctrine eventually to spoil** the **groups' beliefs**, Mtt. 13:33; Lk. 14:10-17, 20-21. Other Scriptures identify **SOME** of these false **doctrines** that teachers are to **oppose** as follows:
 1. Apostates will forbid marriage & partaking of foods, 1 Tim. 4:1-3.
 2. They will hold to uniformitarianism and its product, evolution as foretold in 2 Pet. 3:3-9 (**B.K.C., N.T.**, p. 875); Rev. 3:10f. This error undermines Christ's 1 Cor. 15:21-22 **Second** Adam salvation: evolution holds that life evolved ages before man existed, and that by **survival** of the **fittest**. Thus, death is said to exist before man so that Christ as the **Second** Adam **cannot** conquer **physical death**!
 3. Errant teachers will deny Christ's deity and incarnation, that He is **fully** God **and** man, 1 John 2:18-22; 4:1-3; 2 Peter 2:1-3.

- E. Trend Five - Consequently, in 2 Tim. 3:1-5a, Paul predicted that some people **in these groups** would develop **deep character** flaws. These flaws would make them self-centered, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, verbally abusive, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, not separated from evil, heartless, irreconcilable, slanderous, lacking in self-control, untamed, not loving what is good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure above loving God and hold to an artificial spirituality! **To protect themselves from harm** (middle voice), **the godly are to "shrink back" from close ties with them, 2 Tim. 3:5b!**
- F. Trend Six - (1) The Mtt. 13:44-46 parables are introduced by v. 43 and its obvious reference to **true teachers** in Dan. 12:3: thus, Jesus revealed in these parables of the Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price that **though** the **costs** are **high** from working against the **evils** in Trends 1-5, **God's teachers** will see the **eternally great value** of discipling **anyway**. They will **gladly** invest **all** they have to disciple. (2) According to Mtt. 13:51-52, **Christ** wants His teachers who **have** this **invaluable updated** Matthew 13 insight (things new) to **share** it along with Old Testament **invaluable** insights (things old) with hearers for **their** encouragement and direction. Thus, I am **doing** so **now!**

Lesson Application: *God's uplifting direction for us in today's EVIL world is as follows: (1) believe on Christ as Savior and then grow in applying God's Word, Jn. 3:16; Mtt. 13:18-23! Then, (2) realize that (a) people respond in various ways to true Bible teaching, and that (b) Satan takes advantage of this fact to plant unbelievers among those who respond weakly to Scripture. Know that (c) God does not change this arrangement in order to avoid unsettling His weak believers, Mtt. 13:27-30. (3) As then even SATAN approves of external church growth, we should make spiritual growth our focus, Mtt. 13:31-32. (4) We teachers must counter false teachings that will inevitably arise in groups by teaching the truth, 2 Tim. 4:1-5. Some stands to take will include (a) liberty to marry and partake of all foods (1 Tim. 4:1-3), (b) pure creation opposite uniformitarianism and evolution (2 Pet. 3:3-9 with Rev. 3:10-11) and (c) the deity and incarnation of Christ (1 Jn. 4:1-3). (5) We are also to avoid people who exhibit the flaws of 2 Tim. 3:1-5a (3:5b). (6) Then, though it means trouble from our countering the evils named above, joyfully direct all of our resources to disciple those who hear: their advance and our rewards for helping them are worth whatever it costs us, Mtt. 13:44-46! (7) We must share the insight of #1 thru #6 to equip others to live well today, Mtt. 13:51-52.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

Earlier this month, my wife, Nadine talked to me about a need that had arisen concerning Connie's treatments. We were required to invest another \$300 to meet an insurance deductible, and we just didn't have the money. We had monitored what funds the Church had made available to us to address Connie's needs, but due to various insurance requirements, there just wasn't any way we could address this need.

So, this week, Nadine sat on the edge of our bed going through the Torrington phone book's Yellow Pages, looking for the number of the doctor we have to contact who can administer Connie's medication. We didn't have money to make the appointment, but Nadine decided to get all of the information together, anyway.

As she sat there looking through the phone book, I entered the room and plopped down next to her the stack of mail I had just pulled out of the mailbox. I crossed the room to my dresser to do some figuring on the budget book while Nadine sorted through the mail.

She soon called me back, asking me to read the contents of a note she held up in her hand. The card was from a couple who used to be at Nepaug and who had formerly repeatedly expressed appreciation for our ministry of the Word. They had long since moved away to another state due to a business transfer. In the note was a \$500 check sent to us out of what blessing they claimed the Lord had given them!

The part of this event that means the most to me is the fact that the gift had come as an encouragement of the ministry of the WORD. THAT emphasized the VALUE God places on the work of DISCIPLING that changes people ETERNALLY! In accord with 2 Timothy 2:6, the Lord had led this couple to send us a gift that encouraged me to keep on doing what I have been doing since the couple had been here in regards to giving out His WORD!

A few days later, Nadine received another personal gift from a party in the Church! The party appreciates her work in support of my ministry, a work with *its* **eternally invaluable** effects. **That** gift to Nadine is special to **both** Nadine and me!

Be encouraged to keep serving Christ in advancing the discipleship of others, and do so with all you have, for in God's mind, such service is INVALUABLE no matter what obstacles or difficulties we face in our troubled world in the process!