

UNDERSTANDING DISCIPLESHIP ISSUES IN OUR TIMES

Part II: Understanding How To Serve God Amidst The Two Warring Discipling Agendas (Matthew 13:34-52)

I. Introduction

- A. The men of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32 understood their times to know what Israel ought to do.
- B. Well, we Christians today increasingly sense the need to understand what is going on in Christendom, and desire to know about our times so as to adjust to them well and enjoy God's blessing.
- C. Christ provided prophetic insight to meet this need in Matthew 13, and we continue to view it as follows:

II. Understanding How To Serve God Amidst The Two Warring Discipling Agendas, Matthew 13:34-52.

- A. We learned from the previous lesson that Jesus gave **new** insight in parables in Matthew 13 so only the **godly** could **discern** and **adjust** to enjoy God's **blessing**, cf. Matthew 13:10-16.
- B. Last lesson we found the **first series** of parables show Satan plants unsaved "moles" in groups where God disciplines to counter that discipleship, but God refuses to upset weak believers by removing these "moles."
- C. Well, this situation creates **huge challenges** for those who **minister** the Word, for they can suffer defeat out of ignorance and a lack of preparation for this war. Thus, Christ gave a **second series** of parables to show how God's **SERVANTS** can **think** and **act** to be **blessed** and motivated to serve Him in this **war** :
 - 1. When Jesus sent the people away and entered a house (Mtt. 13:36-52), He spoke **only** to the **twelve**.
 - 2. So, focusing **only** on His **disciples**, Jesus taught four more parables to instruct **them** as God's **servants**.
 - 3. Well, the parables of the Treasure in a Field and Pearl of Great Price aim to encourage God's **servants** on the **value** of **seeking** God's **BLESSING** in God's fulfilling prophecies in their respective ministries, and that to keep them **highly** motivated in spite of the high price they would pay in the discipling war:
 - a. Since the Treasure Hid in the Field (Mtt. 13:44) and the Pearl of Great Price (Mtt. 13:45-46) speak of treasures discovered that excite men into investing their all, we note **three times ELSEWHERE** in the **Matthew 13 CONTEXT** this **same theme APPEARS**, and it relates to God's servants who invest all to see God's prophecies fulfilled in **their** ministries for **blessing**: (a) In Matthew 13:17, Jesus told His disciples many godly men had longed to see the fulfillments of prophecies on Christ's life that they had seen. (b) Then, just before giving the parables on the treasures, at Matthew 13:43, Jesus alluded to the righteous who shine as the sun, a reference to Daniel 12:3-4; there, godly men are predicted to shine as the firmament for **discipling** others in **connection WITH** the increase of Scripture knowledge re: fulfilled prophecy! (c) Finally, at Matthew 13:51-52, a **Scripture** teacher, a **scribe** who understands these parables will bring forth out of the treasure (of His knowledge of prophecy) things (lit.) "unused" (**kaina**) and "old" (**palaia**), cf. R. C. Trench, *Syn. of the N.T.*, p. 219-220; 249-251; *UBS Grk. N.T.*, p. 52. Thus, a Bible teacher will tell his listeners of the Old Testament prophecies of Christ, but also reveal **newer** prophecies made since His first coming and rejection like those in Matt. 13, prophecies they can expect to be fulfilled in **their** era for blessing!
 - b. Well, for **our** era, such "post-first-advent" prophecies include the Revelation 2-3 predictions of Church History, meaning God's servants should long to understand and witness God's fulfilling **these** prophecies of blessing in their **own** ministries as edification to serve God in the discipling war!
 - c. [As you know, I am convinced we are experiencing Revelation 3:14-22 for our Evangelical era!]
 - d. The Parable of the Dragnet reveals the true disciples of God's servants will ultimately be separated from Satan's "moles," so they should be **further** encouraged to keep ministering, Mtt. 13:47-50.
 - e. Thus, joyful from seeing God bless in their ministries in fulfillment of prophecies made about their respective eras, God's servants are to **share** their treasured insight with God's flock, Mtt. 13:51-52!

Lesson Application: To HANDLE the HIGH emotional, mental, physical and even spiritual COSTS of suffering for proclaiming God's Word amidst the discipling WAR between God and Satan that occurs in groups of people, God's SERVANTS (1) must KNOW and HEED prophetic promises regarding the FULFILLMENT of God's prophecies of ministry blessing in THEIR respective discipling ERAS (like Rev. 3:14-22 is for OUR era). (2) They must ALSO know their TRUE converts will be separated from the "moles" in the end. (3) Armed with this insight, God's servants (a) joyfully invest ALL their assets to STAY FERVENT in their ministries, (b) telling others of these priceless truths for THEIR blessing!