

**Luke 3:16-17** <sup>16</sup> John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: <sup>17</sup> Whose fan is in his hand, and he will throughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

- Jesus is the Baptizer but He is also the Thresher! He is both a God of mercy and judgment.
- The “meek and lowly” Jesus proclaimed by the religious world bears no similarity to the real Jesus!
- It was the Prince of Peace who said: “*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.*” (Matthew 10:34)
- It is God's Word which divides the righteous and unrighteous: “*For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*” (Hebrews 4:12)
- Throughout His teaching and earthly ministry, Jesus emphasized that there would be “two camps” claiming to be in His kingdom. However, only one group would really be His people ... and it would be the smaller of the two!
- **Luke 13:23-27** <sup>23</sup> Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them, <sup>24</sup> Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. <sup>25</sup> When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: <sup>26</sup> Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. <sup>27</sup> But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.
- **Matthew 25** tells the story of the ten virgins - divided between the five wise and the five foolish
- **Matthew 7** (the Sermon on the Mount) tells of TWO ways (broad and narrow), TWO trees (good and corrupt), and TWO houses (built on the rock and built on the sand)
- **Jesus is not contrasting the church and the world here, but TWO kinds of believers!**
- **Matthew 7:21-23** <sup>21</sup> Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? (GREEK SHOWS ASTONISHMENT OF SPEAKER) <sup>23</sup> And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity. (GREEK: “I BORE THAT LONG ENOUGH - BEGONE!”)
- **Contrast that with this Scripture:** “*Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*” (1 Corinthians 12:3)
- **The division which takes place at the judgment will be absolutely shocking, as the hidden and careless iniquity of many is exposed!**

### **300,000 SILENT PULPITS**

Six hundred thousand children, between the ages of 3 and 18, are involved in child pornography. Twenty thousand of them will disappear each year, never to be seen again. And 300,000 pulpits are silent.

The networks make a mockery of Christians, the Christian faith and Christian values with nearly every show they air. Greed, materialism, violence, sexual immorality are standard fare. Program after program, movie after movie contains anti-Christian episodes and plots. News articles condescendingly refer to the "fundamental, right wing Christians". Those who speak out for the sacredness of life are branded as extremists. And 300,000 pulpits are silent.

Teenage suicide is the highest it has ever been. The number of teenage alcoholics and drug addicts is the highest ever. Christian morality cannot be taught in schools but atheistic immorality can. Divorce is taking approximately one of every two marriages. The number of children living in broken homes is fast becoming a majority. And 300,000 pulpits are silent.

Rape has increased 700 percent in the last fifty years, and that takes into consideration the population growth. One in four 12-year-old girls will be sexually assaulted in her lifetime. Pornography has become an eight billion dollar business, with some of the largest companies in America involved -- CBS, RCA, Coca Cola, 7-Eleven, Time, Inc. And 300,000 pulpits are silent.

Rock music fills the airways and our children's minds with music which legitimizes rape, murder, sado-masochism, adultery, satanic worship, etc. And 300,000 pulpits are silent.

Thousands of so-called Christians are succumbing daily to the pressures of a politically-correct society, compromising for personal convenience and societal acceptance the non-negotiable principles of Scripture. They have surrendered holiness because it is too burdensome and laid truth to rest in the cold grave of tolerance because it is too exclusive and inflammatory. And 300,000 pulpits are silent!

- In Matthew 13, on the same day (see 12:24 and 13:1) that the Pharisees accused Him of having a devil, Jesus tells several parables which define the nature of His Kingdom. More than half of them deal with the presence of evil-doers who try to hide themselves in the Kingdom:
  - **The Parable of Wheat & Tares shows us there are false christians in the kingdom.**
    - The most common kind of weed (tare) in the Holy Land is the bearded darnel. It is a poisonous grass, almost indistinguishable from wheat until it grows to maturity. Thus, it is uprooted just before the harvest to be bundled and burned.
    - The damage happened in the field while men slept and was done by the enemy.
    - Our task is not to pull up the false but to plant the true! We leave the final division to Jesus, but it is our task to issue a warning from God's Word!
    - God is already beginning to "bundle" the tares through the union of various religious groups into the end-time "world church." Spiritual unity among true Christians is one thing, but religious uniformity among mere professing Christians is another. Real unity doesn't assemble around the lowest common denominator!
  - **The Parable of the Mustard Seed shows us there is false growth in the kingdom.**
    - Since Jesus did not explain this parable, we must use what He did explain in other parables to find its meaning.
    - Birds represented Satan in the Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:19) and a Tree is symbolic of a world power in Daniel 4:12 and Ezekiel 17:23.
    - This parable teaches an abnormal growth that makes it possible for Satan to "sit in the branches" of a worldwide power out of the humble origins of Christianity.
    - If this parable represents the true church, it contradicts Jesus' other teaching.
  - **The Parable of the Leaven shows us that there is false doctrine in the kingdom.**
    - The mustard seed illustrates false outward development of the kingdom, while the leaven illustrates the false inward development of the kingdom.
    - Throughout the Bible leaven is a symbol of evil, used to picture hypocrisy, carnality, false teaching and worldly compromise.
    - Sin works invisibly while it grows, corrupts and "puffs up."
    - If leaven represents the spread of the gospel, it contradicts Jesus' other teaching.
- **HOWEVER, THE REAL TEST IS NOT DURING THE AGE BUT AT THE END OF THE AGE!**

- We've heard many sermons about "Jesus the Baptizer" but few about "Jesus the Thresher." However, John introduces Christ's ministry by referring to both images.
- The ancient process of Threshing is one of the most striking Scriptural images of the division between the righteous and unrighteous in God's kingdom at the end of the church age.
- In Bible times, grain was laid out on a level and hard-beaten plot in the open air called the Threshing Floor. Then the grain was either beaten with flails or tread by oxen to beat out the grains; this produced husks and broken straw which was to be discarded. To separate it, the grain was tossed in the air with a winnowing fan where the wind would catch the lighter chaff and blow it out of the heavier grain as it fell back to the ground. Finally, the piles of chaff were burned in case the wind changed and it might be blown again among the grain.
- **HIS FAN IS IN HIS HAND!** The grain is now being taken to the threshing floor, where the "beating" and "treading" of the last days is separating the wheat from the chaff. God is bringing a revival wind and a shaking to His church to winnow the grain, as prophesied in His Word:
  - **Joel 3:16** *The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people ...*
  - **Haggai 2:6-7** *For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations ...*
  - **Hebrews 12:26-27** *... Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven ... that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*
- What does a loving parent do when a child is sleeping but must wake up? That parent takes his child gently by the shoulders and shakes him. If the child doesn't wake up immediately, the shaking then becomes a bit more firm and serious - because the parent knows the child will suffer if he doesn't wake up. That's just what God is doing right now to the church! At first, He shook us very tenderly. But now His shaking has become violent - because He has still not succeeded in waking us up! **GOD IS BEGINNING TO WINNOW THE GRAIN! CHAFF WILL BE DESTROYED!**