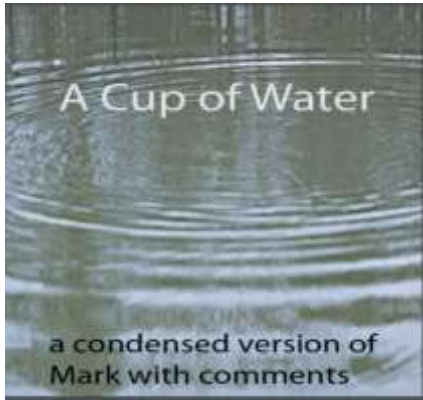


Preaching thru the Bible in one year, PTB 32b:

When Confused, Listen to Jesus On A Cup of Water.



The nations of the whole world stand before Jesus at the End of the Age, and what does Jesus use as a basis to separate the sheep from the goats, a cup of water. It is certainly scary enough to think that our eternal welfare, can depend on a single act of kindness like a drink of water, or a free meal, or visitation of the sick and needy; and that it is our treatment of the "least" in the kingdom of God that is most important; but beyond the significance of our eternal welfare in hell or heaven, is the respect and treatment of kingdom members, Christ's brethren, that He demands of us. You will find in this study of "A Condensed Version of Mark with

Comments" that Jesus fervently sought out the least in the kingdom in order to do them acts of kindness. Certainly among the least were the fisherman He chose to be His Apostles, a tax collector like Matthew had little respect in the kingdom, then there were the Gentiles where He healed their children, and the woman of Samaria at Jacob's well that He engaged in a conversation about the welfare of her soul. It was the little children, of whom He said "don't stand in their way of getting to Him", and who He made examples of the simple faith necessary for kingdom membership; it was the blind man along the road, the leper that was shunned by society, and we can go on and on; and we will go on and on in the chapters to follow from Mark, always using Mark as only a condensed guide to the rest of the Bible, taking from the whole counsel of God in the Book, what will help in the understanding of the Giant Parable called the Bible.

NOTE: A little research on the free downloads offered to you from SunGrist websites, will show that the Gospel of Mark was used in the Learn Christ Commentaries, 8 volumes, and a foundational structure in the Bible Outline from the OT quotes in the NT, as a brief version of don't miss anything, and in the Master Tables you will find it one of the major columns under Mark as an Appendix. There are several reasons for that: Mark is short and terse, was written by John Mark based on the manuscripts the Apostle Paul left to him which included the written testimonies of two other Apostles, included the last of the manuscript on all the OT quotes to be included in the 14 books written by Paul himself and those in the 3 other books by Dr. Luke and John Mark that he left for them to "complete his ministry". Scholars mistakenly call the years at Tarsus immediately after the conversion of Saul the persecutor of Christians on the road to Damascus to the Apostle to the Gentiles, a year in Arabia where the Ascended Christ could improve his wisdom on his lawyer like perspectives of the OT, and writing all those foundations of the NT quotes in the OT during the 7 very loud years. Another reason, Jesus is the bottom line of all truth and all Bible, both His life recorded by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and Paul, Peter, and James; and His teachings are the pinnacle of interpretation of the Bible. Mark is a good paraphrase of that life and those teachings. It has become indispensable in writing first a complete outline of the Bible while filling in many gaps between the OT quotes in the NT, and in preaching thru the Bible in one year.

And we are also surprised that it takes so little to get into the kingdom of heaven--a cup of water, a meal, or a single visit or act of kindness for the less important person in the kingdom. Surprised that the great wisdom of the universe could find nothing more as a criterion for final judgment, and separation of the goats from the sheep, as simply a cup of water. Like Naaham, the leper, we would look for some famous body of water to cleanse in instead of the muddy waters of the Jordan. But there we are: It is from Jesus Himself, and we dare not neglect what He is teaching us!

Although the parable of the tares has been alive and well since Jesus taught it over two thousand years ago, there are implications of it for today that are not comprehended. For example, the tares in the kingdom and churches have leaders, and those Bible teaching and preaching leaders are to be treated with the same distant respect as the tares themselves. When the Apostle John tried to stop some disciples from work for Christ, those who had been disciples of John the Baptist, the bottom line of what Jesus told them was, "let them alone". Increasingly we are seeing more and more heaping up of weird and unusual Bible teachers and preachers, which we do not wish to label as false prophets and teachers; and in an effort to treat them with the toleration demanded in an American Democratic Society, we have hit on the "itching ear" label of II Timothy 4 in order to explain what is happening in this time of the Falling Away.

The distant respect of "Leave them alone" might be considered in the same category of the "forget about them" that I heard from one southwest seminary professor in reference to the fundamentalists like James Robinson. {I will explain later the differences between a fundamentalists and conservatives on the Bible; however, may it suffice for the moment to say that they are not the same.} This was approximately 20 years ago at the climax of the period in which the Bible church fundamentalists took control of the Southern Baptist Convention led by men like Adrian Rogers, Charles Stanley, W.A. Criswell, and from a distance, Jerry Falwell. It was a majority movement, very similar to the moral majority, where certain community traditions took precedence over real Bible. It must remind one of how the religious leaders of scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees of Jesus' day were labeled as "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men". In the nature of church and denominational history it had to happen, but the shock of seeing it happen in the once most conservative and evangelistic denomination up to that point in history, made us seek explanations of the fundamentalists takeover in other terms. {See some of the books written in the last 20 years with multiple attempts to explain what happened.}

However, I would maintain that the distant respect of "leave them alone" for these fundamentalists and other leaders of the tares is more like the "don't associate with them" of II Timothy 3, the roll call of bad church behavior, or the "do not keep company with such who are believers" of I Corinthians. I hope you recall, or will check, these two Bible references on "non-associate" and "non-companionship" in II Timothy 3:1-9 and I Corinthians 5:9-11.

"I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone name a brother, who is

sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner – not even to eat with such a person.” (I Corinthians 5:9-11)

A few explanations about these Bible verses which may or may not be obvious: (1) the policy of Paul and John, which by the way they got from Jesus and the Holy Spirit can be generalized as “in the world, but not of the world”. Paul said when I said “not to keep company” with certain people, I meant not to keep company with certain believers who are church members. There had been so misunderstanding of what Paul wrote in a previous letter: some people thought Paul meant not to keep company with the people of the world who were sexually immoral as a habit of life, or who were covetous, extortioners, or idolaters. No, Paul is writing now: if were to not keep company with such people in the world, you would have to get out of the world. So you see a summary is “in the world, but not of the world”. {What the Apostle John means in the “not of the world” of I John will be discussed in a later chapter, or perhaps you can read of it in SOME MORE SOUNDS...Snatching, Stumbling, and the Falling Away.} (2)

Here is the bottom line according to the Spirit through Paul, if you know any believer or church member who practices as a habit of life these bad behaviors, which by the way is much like the bad behavior characteristics of church members of II Timothy 3, then you are not to even eat out with them or eat in their homes and have them over to eat in your home. (3). Stop right here, I am not calling these fundamentalists, or even the heaped up itching ear weirdos on television, things like “sexual immorals”, or “drunkards”; but in the getting around the toleration of the tares in favor of a A CUP OF WATER for the least brethren in the kingdom, we will find that they do fall into the category of “covetous” for money, disciples, and status – much like the bad church member characteristic of “lovers of money” and “lovers of self”, also the “extortioners” as they do seek and get extorted money under the disguise of more noble ends, and later in this book we will even make a case for idolatry for them.

The sad reality, according to Jesus in the parable of the tares and the wheat is that Satan has put the tares into that part of the kingdom called the local church, even beyond that to the church and denominations; and Satan has done that in order to cause offences against the least in the kingdom. We must preserver against this most detrimental of all influences in order to get past these that take the first places in the kingdom in order to serve the least in the kingdom with at least a cup of water.

You see in itching ears Bible teachers what we are addressing is the kind of bible preachers who talk a great deal about Christ, God, and the Bible. You do not wish to call false prophets and teachers anyone you hear talking a lot about God, Christ, and the Bible. And those are the people that Jesus told John to “leave alone”. Jesus elaborated, “For no one can speak lightly of me that is active as one of my disciples.” You see, it is not those who speak against Christ that is the subject of a cup of water versus toleration of the tares, it is those who are constrained to guard carefully their words about Christ because in order to create the very impression that they know they are creating.

Conservative, Not Fundamentalist

Fundamentalists will not admit that it is possible to be conservative on the Bible without being a fundamentalist. Like so many people in the world who operate more on

appearance than reality, they claim to be the only conservatives; yet with their “pick and chose” Bible interpretation method, they are only conservative on what they “pick”, quite liberal in what they chose to ignore, especially on the current realities of the Falling Away. Since it is difficult to simultaneously claim to have all the answers, as the fundamentalists do, they ignore the parts of the Bible that teach that the Falling Away must happen before the Second Coming. Listen, do you not hear them on the Second Coming, and you do not hear them on the Falling Away. This silence on the Falling Away is within itself proof of the Falling Away. If you think about it for a while, you will realize that one of the most outstanding characteristics of the Falling Away, besides as sin abounds the love of many waxes cold from Jesus, is the intolerance toward sound doctrine. There is no more intolerance of sound doctrine than to leave it out completely as if it were not part of the Bible itself. You see, what they do is to pick what is convenient for them to preach and ignore what does not serve their purpose. A case could be made that this kind of pick and chose method of interpretation is worse than liberalism.

Here I should remind fundamentalists that “all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable”; and to ignore part of it is to cheat church members and to overlook “every Word that comes out of the mouth of God.” The time has already “come when they {the “they” in II Timothy 4 is obviously church members and other believers, but in the “tares” category} will not endure sound doctrine”, yet any Bible teacher can not ignore certain sound doctrines because they are not profitable to him or her personally or not profitable to the organization that he or she represents. **YOU JUST CAN NOT IGNORE ANY PART OF THE SOUND DOCTRINES OF SCRIPTURES.** {By the way the soundest doctrine of all is the kind of respect for all persons that must include the least in the kingdom, and the sound doctrine of giving them a drink of water. What is truly being said by the example of the life of Jesus, and the teachings of Jesus, is that our treatment and graciousness toward the least brethren in the kingdom really is the evidence of our right to be among the sheep at the Final Gathering.}

Even the “proof text” method of Bible interpretation and teaching that they often practice is fraught with the “pick and chose” method when a verse or passage is not considered in the total context of the text. This is the age-old principle of hermeneutics called “exegesis” versus “isogesis”: exegesis is to read the meaning out of the Bible, while isogesis is to come to the passage with some pre-conceived meaning or motivation to read meaning into it. A case in point is the pastor of a large fundamentalist church and seminary in Memphis, Tennessee who wanted to preach an applicable message on the first Sunday of the year 2000, and he wanted that message to have some sense of urgency about end time. So in his passage from one of the Gospels was the simple sentence that “after six days Jesus and the disciples went” some certain place. Yes, you got it this fundamentalist spun and spiritualized the six days to be the equivalent of the last days on this earth. There was no need for this: there is Matthew 24 on eschatology, the book of Revelation, the teachings of Peter on the earth will melt with fervent heat, and Paul’s book of II Thessalonians with the end time teachings that include the Falling Away, revelation of the man of sin, and the withdrawal of the Holy Spirit from the earth, with the clarity that these things must happen before Christ comes again. Is he worse than a liberal? I think so, because he is preaching and teaching something under the guise of from the scripture, it is not in that passage at all.

Can a person talk about Christ, God, and the Bible, be in the church or be a church leader, and still not be “wheat”? Yes, that is the gist of the Parable of Tares that was told by Jesus. You see we have isolated our concepts of church membership from the realities of the Bible. The Bible, time and again, faces up to the reality that many can be in the churches, denominations, or even claim kingdom membership, who have not learned Christ. Paul looked at the Gentiles in Ephesus and the church members at the Ephesus church: then he noted that he did not see any differences. The behavior of the church members was the same as other Gentiles in Ephesus. Paul wrote in Ephesians, “This is not the way you learned Christ, if indeed you heard Him and were taught of Him.”

Wow, did you miss that in reading the book of Ephesians. I am sure that you did not hear it from your fundamentalists preacher; for in this time of the Falling Away, the preachers that survive in their positions do so primarily by: (1) convincing their congregation or audience that they are the elect of God; (2) that by joining in with them you are engaged in the real work of God; and (3) that they have “THE SOLUTION”, and that if you join them, with or without the new birth, you are part of the solution. Later in the book we will deal with what it means “to hear Jesus” and “be taught by Him”. Let me say now, however, that it is the opposite of the famous instantaneous new birth {or born again} concept of the fundamentalists. It is amazing how these evangelists can take the analogy of Jesus between physical and spiritual birth with the obvious statement “you must be born again”; then fail to realize that the new birth may take the same 9 months or longer as does physical birth. Does that make sense to you? That is it takes at least 9 months to be physical born, or in that ballpark for a normal birth, then it must take some period of time for the spiritual birth, eliminating many who claim to experience an instantaneous new birth. {You see another case of pick and choice from the fundamentalists.} In the parable of the seed and the farmer that was told by Jesus, the individuals who were compared to the seed sown among thorns instantly received it with joy, but later as time passed the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and other things choked it out. Now, you know in most churches during revival and in any assembly if a person were noted to instantly received the Word of God with joy, that person would be labeled as “saved” without waiting to see if the 9-month new birth would be completed. There actually are some very large churches who would assist the new convert with their examples and messages to accept the “things” of the cares of this world to the extent that their messages actually serve to choke out the Word. This in the old fashion jargon was called “putting a live bitty under a dead hen”. What has changed now is that while the “dead hen” generally in the past was considered to be some liturgic church members, now in this time of the Falling Away it is the Bible teachers and preachers that are the dead hens. And they are very good at it. They talk about Christ, God, and the Bible so how can they be a bad example. Remember it is what is not said that is as important as what is said; and it is the thrust of the message more than key words. Does their influence exert itself in the direction of the cares of this world for personal gain and prosperity, for the deceitfulness of riches, or other things?

The American Democratic Faith

At first, I thought it strange that an authority on the history of American Thought would call his book THE MAIN DOCTRINES OF THE AMERICAN DEMOCRATIC FAITH. However though the years as I have pondered what Bible teachers and believers

substitute for the faith of the Bible and of Jesus, it has dawned on me that the substitute is an American Democratic Faith. I used to gainsay what former prime minister of Israel said about Americans and Jews. What he said was that "we in Israel are born Jews just like you Americans are born Christians." At first it sounded ridiculous, but that the two kinds of faith have been mixed should be obvious. I think there are some overlaps because it is obvious that during this time of the Fulness of the Gentiles, the period during which the Jews are blind to the Gospel, the United States has been the undisputed leader in the spread of the Gospel to every nation. This is another way of saying that God has indeed used the United States to help in the spread of the Gospel to every nation. Some of us also reluctantly accept the observation by a foreign student of the US who said, "to be an American is more a religion and a character than a set of beliefs or a matter of citizenship." More often you will hear from mister average citizen what I heard as a young pastor visiting with a man up the valley in Arkansas when I asked him if he was a believer. "Yes", the indignant reply was, "I was born in this country!" And, "Did you think I am a heathen?"

Quickly I would mention five obvious differences between the American Democratic Faith and the Faith of the Bible and Jesus.

- (1) The majority is king in the American Democratic Faith while it is the minority in the Bible that goes the narrow way that leads to life eternal. You will note that the schools as the chief custodians of American culture, government, and society do most of their work in terms of the priority for the majority. Always, in the Old Testament, and in any movement or country in history, there has been a "remnant" of real believers, definitely a minority type word and concept. Quite often in the Old Testament, God preferred a dedicated minority to a majority. Jesus taught the parable of the broad and narrow way, clarifying that the many that go the broad way to destruction are the majority and the few that go the narrow way that leads to eternal life are the minority. One might contend that the United States is completely different from the world in which Jesus taught in that now in our country and in our time, the majority of US citizens go the narrow and right way and the minority of US citizens go the broad and wrong way. Perhaps, if it were ever true of this country, in this time in which our country has also become part of the worldwide Falling Away movement, it is no longer true. As far as real faith in God, Christ, and the Bible there is little difference between citizens of America and citizens of any other nation, and you can make a much better case for that conclusion.

We might put it this way for simplicity and agreement: While the emphasis in America is on the priority for the majority, the emphasis in the Bible is on priority for the minority.

What difference does it make? Well, without this Bible concept of priority of the minority, you will be more influenced by the world. Satan, the prince of this world, runs this world whether it is in the United States or elsewhere, and consequently he uses the majority of this world in order to deter and destroy faith in Jesus and the Bible. {By the way if you claimed that the majority in American go the narrow way that leads to life, then maybe you would be inclined to think that Satan only works in other countries. You could have the simplistic concept that all evil is in Korea, Iraqi, and I forget what the other country is.} What difference does it make? Well, without this Biblical majority-minority concept for now and in this country, you will have trouble accepting the Scripture, "all that will

godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”, and this is not limited by any means to physical persecution. The politically correct in churches, government, and society can separate you as a member of that Jesus minority.

The greatest danger of all is that you can subject yourself to Bible teachers and believers that have already become victims of the Falling Away. You will tend to become like them, and you will listen to what they do teach and preach even though long ago they came to the point where they would not endure sound doctrine, “they out of their own desires heaped up teachers with itching ears”, turned away from the truth and turned into fables. {One word of caution, look for Bible teachers and believers that are preaching (1) the Falling Away and (2) A 9 month of so new birth, and shun the progenitors of silence on the Falling Away.}

(2) A second major difference between the American Democratic Faith and the faith of the Bible and Jesus is on the concept of “toleration”. So much that believers know to be true they will not even speak, for the fear that they will seem non-tolerant and therefore non-American. An extreme example is that the Presbyterian Church a few years ago voted whether to decree that a stop should be made on the claim that Jesus is the only way of salvation, because it seems too intolerant. I don’t know how the vote came out, but the very fact that a so-called Bible believing denomination would have to vote on such a fundamentals Bible belief about Jesus and salvation is within itself intolerable.

A Condensed Version of Mark?

As you read this book, you may think there is a lot of other Bible to be simply a condensed version of Mark. Yes, there is; and that is the point. What we can understand of Mark, in the very nature of revelation and illumination, is “profitable for doctrine, etc.” only as it is kept in the total context of the Bible; and what we truly understand of Mark is true only to the extent that it is consistent with the Authorized Semi-Public Interpretation of the Bible. The same God put the truth in Moses and John, Ezekiel and Revelation, Daniel and Mark. The Bible when you come down to it is a reflection of the consistent mind and character of God; and above all in the characteristics of God we must see stability, consistency in God who is “the same yesterday, today, and forever.” What you will find as you spend more and more time in the Bible is that you come to understand more as you also understand more the Great Author of the Bible. It is like living with a loved one here on earth, the more you listen to them and see and hear the consistency of their character, the more you can even predict what they are going to say on other occasions. For example what God had to say in Daniel, and what God has to say in the many explanations of Old Testament quotes in Mark and other books of the Bible, lead to more understanding of the Christ and God we serve.

It will become more clear to you as you get away from the “kingdom” concepts of Darby and the 1000 year temporary reign of Christ on earth concepts of Scofield, those concepts effectively propagandized by the Scofield Reference Bible and Tim LeHaye, that with Jesus, Paul, and the first century Christians, we have seen most of what we are going to see in a spiritual movement from the Jews. God gave them one year and the Messiah was cut off, as recorded in Daniel, to make things right with Him through faith-salvation in Christ, then the abomination of desolation was complete. “What profit is it then to be a

Jew?" Paul asks and explains in Romans. And the answer comes back, "because to them were committed the oracles of God." Wow, what a marvelous job, sometimes in spite of the majority movement among the Hebrews, did the Jewish people do in protecting and promoting the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. Paul was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, also a Roman citizen, and formerly a persecutor of the church, before the Ascended Christ decided that He needed a dedicated scholar and lawyer of the Jewish nation to write 14 books so the New Testament and sponsor with his influence and manuscripts three more, setting the pattern which Jesus gave to him in Saudi Arabia of quoting with an interpretation in the New Testament of the Old Testament truth. So much of where fundamentalists {today's incarnation of Darby and Scofield, their hunt and peck method of Bible interpretation with superficiality of Bible more dangerous, with their fighting spirit, than even their concepts from Darby and Scofield} see in the Old Testament a period of peace and prosperity with a material kingdom in Israel is the "consummation" of Daniel. It is the time, at the end of time, when the kingdoms of this world become really the kingdom of Christ; it is the time when the new Jerusalem is lowered down from heaven and all government is established there over all the multitudes which no man can number of every nation, tribe, and people; and it is the time when the new heaven and new earth are established by God for ever and ever, as the old heaven and old earth pass away, and there is no more sea. It is going to be difficult for you to break free if you have been a victim of such fundamentalist teachings. One thing you will notice is that you are not hearing about the Falling Away from such fundamentalists that have taken control of the Southern Baptist Convention. There are two reasons for that: (1) it is difficult to stake a claim on having all the answers like Jerry Falwell, Tim LeHaye, and Charles Stanley – co-founders of the Moral Majority, and still admit that the Falling Away has come to fulfillment under their watch; and (2) they remain in power by convincing their audience that they are the chosen of God, therefore it is hard for them to say to the other Tares, you are Falling Away from God, Christ, and the Bible. Indeed, Falwell believes as he says that Rick Warren's heresies in the name of church unity, LeHaye's fictions, along with his political and social power are waves of spiritual revival, while indeed these efforts, including the takeover of the SBC by his group, are the very unsoundness in doctrine and spirit that has precipitated if not induced the Falling Away. Certainly they have enhanced the Falling Away. Why are they so silent on it? That within itself is proof! Won't it be amazing if these who have made themselves "first" in the kingdom of God, taking by force the prime seats at the feasts, are found to be the "last" when we come to the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. And if they are among the tares, we will not see them at all! Like the Jewish people of the first century, and about whom Paul wrote in Romans 1, they have tried to take and maintain the moral high ground. While they would present themselves as teachers of the law, they need some one to teach them again what are the first principles of Bible and a proper spirit.

Although as we look for the two things to be fulfilled before the Second Coming as Paul laid out in II Thessalonians – the falling away and the man of sin; and while many times based on Daniel, we may lean toward Osama Bin Laden as the man of sin and of perdition; though sometimes we lean toward the Pope as the final anti-Christ which will be the man of sin, sometimes it seems that the fundamentalists have been the most dominant influence in the Falling Away. I am sure it is our lack of understanding that forces us to speculate between men like Falwell, men like Osama Bin Laden, and men like the Pope for fulfillment of the man of sin. And the fact, as Daniel was told, that our

complete understanding of the last events is still somewhat sealed up, leads us to believe that we are still major steps from the Falling Away. Just remember, that like Satan himself, who was an angel of light, the man of sin and perdition must appear to be very right and righteous to be a wolf in sheep's clothing and in order to deceive many. As sin abounds, he must be a leader in the waxing cold of love. The love must diminish under his leadership, and the Gospel of the kingdom of Christ will have to be replaced with something else, like maybe the Gospel of the Moral Majority.

Book Bottom Line: Spiritual Terrorism

“He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’” (Matthew 13:28)

Can You buy those words from Jesus Himself? That there is spiritual terrorism within the churches. We are concerned about physical terrorism in our country when we should be more concerned about the spiritual terrorism in our churches and the kingdom at large. Our problem is that we can not tell the difference between wheat and tares even when they come out from being underground: we do not know the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian, between a false Bible teacher and a true Bible teacher; and even when we do suspect a church member, a church, or a denomination, or their leaders we are so indoctrinated in the American Democratic Faith as to put tolerance ahead of dis-association from them as recommended by the Bible. Do you get what Jesus is saying, “the enemy is within” the kingdom and the churches? Satan has put many tares in our local churches in order to subvert the real work of the kingdom of God, and many of those tares are leaders with itching ears.