

## **Matthew 13**

**Matt 13:5-6 they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched**

**Neal A. Maxwell**

"Perhaps the parable about the gospel seed falling on different kinds of soil and not flourishing in one type of soil because there was 'no deepness of earth' also describes the shallowness of those who do not ponder and pursue the basic doctrines." (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*, 98.)

**Matt 13:10 Why speakest thou unto them in parables**

"From the Lord's own words we learn the reason for this method. It was to veil the meaning. The parable conveys to the hearer religious truth exactly in proportion to his faith and intelligence; and to the dull and uninspired it is a mere story 'seeing they see not,' while to the instructed and spiritual it reveals the mysteries or secrets of the kingdom of heaven." (Bible Dictionary, *Parables*)

**Boyd K. Packer**

"In the four Gospels in the New Testament are recorded thirty-six parables that the Lord used. With a little resourcefulness, all of us as teachers can use this technique. It is simply the process of developing, creating, or inventing an imaginary situation that represents a real-life situation. For some reason, it is used very little. This is unfortunate, because it is an easy way to drive home an otherwise difficult lesson. When I say an easy way, that is comparatively speaking. It takes work and imagination and resourcefulness to create a parable, but great profit comes from the time expended when the results are considered." (*Teach Ye Diligently*, 204.)

**Matt 13:11 Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given**

**Joseph Smith**

"We understand from this saying that those who had been previously looking for a Messiah to come, according to the testimony of the prophets, and were then at that time looking for a Messiah but had not sufficient light,

on account of their unbelief, to discern him to be their Savior-and he being the true Messiah-consequently, they must be disappointed and lose even all the knowledge, or have taken away from them, all the light, understanding, and faith which they had upon this subject. Therefore, he that will not receive the greater light must have taken away from him all the light which he hath. And 'if the light which is in you become darkness, behold, how great is that darkness!' [Matt. 6:23]. . . . Now we discover that the very reason assigned by [Isaiah] why they would not receive the Messiah was because they did not or would not understand [Isa. 6:9-10]. And seeing, they did not perceive. . . .We draw the conclusion, then, that the very reason why the multitude, or the world, as they were designated by the Savior, did not receive an explanation upon his parables was because of unbelief. 'To you,' he says speaking to his disciples, 'it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God.' And why? Because of the faith and confidence they had in him." (Kent P. Jackson, comp. and ed., *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible*, 92)

**Matt 13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance**

The promises of the Lord are great to those who are open to receive spiritual truths:

'It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full. And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.'(Alma 12:9-11.)

'For thus saith the Lord-I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom. Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations. And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught. For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will-yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.' (DC 76:5-10)

**Matt 13:14 seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive**

**Thomas S. Monson**

"Each of us knows those who do not have sight. We also know many others who walk in darkness at noonday. Those in this latter group may never carry the usual white cane and carefully make their way to the sound of its familiar tap, tap, tap. They may not have a faithful seeing-eye dog by their side nor carry a sign about their neck which reads, 'I am blind.' But blind they surely are. Some have been blinded by anger, others by indifference, by revenge, by hate, by prejudice, by ignorance, by neglect of precious opportunities.

"Of such the Lord said, '. . . their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.' (Matt. 13: 15.)"

"Well might such lament, 'It is springtime, the gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored, and yet I am blind.' Some like the friend of Philip of old call out, 'How can I [find my way] except some man should guide me?' (Acts 8:31.) Others are too shy, too fearful to ask for needed help that their precious vision might be restored. (*Conference Report, April 1965, Second Day-Morning Meeting 48.*)

**Carlos E. Asay**

"Blindness of mind is really spiritual darkness. It is a condition or state of mind that alienates people, young or old, from godly matters. Those who suffer from this awful condition fail to see the hand of providence manifest in the affairs of mankind. They believe only in that which can be seen and felt and hefted. In effect, a dark curtain of unbelief has been drawn over their minds, causing them to see little or no purpose in their being.

"Much like the sightless man who cautiously makes his way down the street tapping his cane to identify the hazards that lie ahead, the person 'blind of mind' stumbles awkwardly through life. Every step is tentative; each roadblock is almost insurmountable; and progress is painfully slow at best. Of such people it is said they 'have eyes to see, and see not'; 'Their eyes cannot see afar off'; they 'shall see, and shall not perceive.'" (*The Road to Somewhere: A Guide for Young Men and Women*, 10)

**Matt 13:17 many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them**

How many of us have desired to see those things which the apostles saw and have not seen them? This same fascination with the life of Christ has drawn millions to the Holy Land. Those who would love to witness his divine ministry, can, at least, walk where Jesus walked. When Elder LeGrand Richards visited the sea of Galilee, he took off his shoes and socks and walked out into the water so that he could feel the water between his toes. Those waters had been the sight of so many great sermons and miracles-Elder Richards wanted to feel a part of those great events.

**President Howard W. Hunter** had a great love for the Holy Land, declaring:

"I watched darkness fall and the lights come on in Old Jerusalem. A full moon rose and cast a glow over the city below, which is steeped in meaningful history. Words don't very well express the feelings that came to me, alone and in the quiet of the cool evening.'

"Elder Faust said, 'As we [Elder Faust and Pres. Hunter] would visit places of some significance to the story of the Holy Land, he would just seem to relax and soak up his surroundings.

"He loved the Galilee, but I think the Garden Tomb was his favorite place in all of the Holy Land. Every time we would go over, even if we had only an hour to spare, he would say, 'Let's go over to the Garden Tomb for old

time's sake.' He liked to just sit in the Garden Tomb area. He would sit there and meditate and commune with the Spirit.

"Sometimes I felt like there had to be some kind of spiritual connection with the Holy Land that impelled him to always want to go back. It just drew him, like a giant magnet. He loved to be where the Savior walked, ministered and taught. Even after he became so ill, he would brighten right up and smile when anyone spoke to him of the Holy Land." (He Wanted To Visit the Holy Land 'just One More Time', *LDS Church News*, 1995, 03/11/95)

### **Harold B. Lee**

"For three glorious days we walked on sacred ground and felt the influence of the greatest person who ever lived upon this earth, Jesus the Christ, the very Son of the living God...For the first time, there in the Holy Land, I think I began to appreciate that lovely sacred refrain that has been put to music, 'I walked today where Jesus walked.'

"...[Speaking of the Garden Tomb] Something seemed to impress us as we stood there that this was the holiest place of all, and we fancied we could have witnessed the dramatic scene that took place there. That tomb has a mouth that could be sealed by a rolling stone, and there is a stone track built to guide a stone as it was rolled across the mouth of the tomb. The stone has now been removed, but the stone track is still there. Mary, after peering into the tomb, saw that He was missing, and she went out weeping bitterly." (*Ye Are the Light of the World: Selected Sermons and Writings of Harold B. Lee*, Chap. 40)

**Matt 13:18-23 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower**

### **Howard W. Hunter**

"The parable of the sower is really a parable of hearers. In the parable [of the sower, Matthew 13:1-8], the different soils on which the seed fell become the subject-four different kinds of soil describing four classifications of persons...Its very purpose is to show how various listeners respond. There are as many differences in those who listen as there are differences in the soils in which seed is sown." (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 253-4)

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

"A wise comment on the parable of the sower was made by **James E. Talmage** when he wrote:

'In the parable we are considering, the Teacher depicted the varied grades of spiritual receptivity existing among men, and characterized with incisive brevity each of the specified grades. He neither said nor intimated that the hard-baked soil of the wayside might not be plowed, harrowed, fertilized, and so be rendered productive; nor that the stony impediment to growth might not be broken up and removed, or an increase of good soil be made by actual addition, nor that the thorns could never be uprooted, and their former habitat be rendered fit to support good plants.' (*Jesus the Christ.*)

"The 'hard-baked' disciple often experiences the harrowing necessary to disrupt the unyielding terrain of his life so he can receive and retain the Gospel seed." (*A Time to Choose*, 34.)

### **Howard W. Hunter**

"Sowing of seed is important; otherwise, there would be no harvest, and as stated in the parable, there must be good ground to bring forth a good harvest. Plowing must have been done before the sowing or there would have been no seedbed.

"Of all the work of the field, plow-work is the heaviest labor. It is primary and fundamental-it is pioneer toil. A seed may be dropped anywhere, and there is no resistance, but put the blade of the plow into the ground and a thousand forces join to oppose the change. To disturb the conventional to overturn the traditional, or to attempt to make changes in the deep-rooted way of doing things in the lives of individuals, requires toil and sweat. The heaviest work in the kingdom of God is to turn the hard surface of the earth which has been baked in the sun or covered by the growth of nature. What a great change comes over land which has been cleared and plowed,-row after row of evenly spaced furrows, the subsurface loosened and exposed to the sun and air and the rains from heaven, ready to be broken up and planted to seed. The wilderness is conquered and subdued.

"Those who become disciples of the Master and put their hands to the plow without turning back prove themselves to be worthy plowmen. By turning over the old surfaces of tradition, they prepared the fields for the

introduction and the spread of Christianity into the world." (*Conference Report, April 1961, First Day-Morning Meeting 17.*)

**Matt 13:19 This is he which received seed by the way side**

**Dallin H. Oaks**

"...there are many whose desires are fixed so firmly on the acquisition or use of property, or on other worldly things, that they have no desire for righteousness or the things of God. In the parable of the sower, Jesus indicated that some of the sower's seed 'fell by the way side' (Matthew 13:4). He explained to his disciples that this circumstance represented those who 'heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not' (Matthew 13:19). The **Prophet Joseph Smith** attributed this lack of understanding of the gospel to a lack of desire:

"Men who have no principle of righteousness in themselves, and whose hearts are full of iniquity, and have no desire for the principles of truth, do not understand the word of truth when they hear it. The devil taketh away the word of truth out of their hearts, because there is no desire for righteousness in them.' (History of the Church 2:266)

"The seeds representing the word of God will always fall 'by the way side' for those who give their priority attention to traffic on the highway of worldly things. If there is no desire for the principles of truth, the seed that represents the word of God can never bear fruit." (*Pure in Heart, 54-55.*)

**Matt 13:20-21 he that received the seed into stony places...heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it**

The parable of the sower can be applied to lifetime members or to missionary work. When applying the parable to missionary work, there seems to be a natural progression in the receptivity of the soil. For instance, missionaries sometimes teach those who are interested enough to meet, but they may only receive one discussion. Though the Spirit testified of the truthfulness of the message, friends and family quickly converge to destroy the planted seed- This is the seed which fell by the way side.

Next, the missionaries plant the seed 'into stony places.' Often these individuals are described as "golden investigators." These coveted investigators are those who 'with joy' receive the message. They may finish all

the missionary discussions; they may even be baptized. But when the missionary leaves the area, or when it becomes too difficult to live the Word of Wisdom, or when other persecutions mount, 'by and by' they become offended. The loss of these can be particularly difficult for missionaries who were sure that the soil was adequately prepared and the roots were sufficiently deep. To use another image, "The Savior's statement about the kingdom's being like a net that 'gathered of every kind' ("Matt. 13:47Matthew 13:47) suggests the tragic flopping of some out of the net." (Neal A. Maxwell, *Things As They Really Are*, xiii.)

Next, are those investigators whose faithfulness lasts for years. These can coexist with the weeds for a season or two, but eventually lose their spiritual breath as the word is slowly choked out of them. Therefore, the sower must be most concerned with those elements which destroy the seed. They are 1) the wicked one stealing away that which was sown, 2) offense because of tribulation or persecution, and 3) the cares of this world and riches.

**Matt 13:22 seed among the thorns**

**Bruce R. McConkie**

"If the seed falls among thorns, it is in good soil, as is evidenced by the growth of the undesirable plants. But the good plant is soon choked and dies because it cannot overcome the influence of the weeds and thistles. So it is with the members of the Church who know the gospel is true, but who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus, who are not affirmatively and courageously striving to further the interests of the Church. So it is of the saints who think more of the honors of men, the educational standards of the world, political preferment, or money and property, than they do of the gospel. They know the Lord's work has been established on earth, but they let the cares of the world choke the word. And instead of gaining eternal life, they shall be burned with the tares which overcame them." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1: 289.)

**Hugh B. Brown**

"Just as the garden needs fertilizing, cultivating, weeding-constant care and eternal vigilance-so our lives, if they are to be productive of good, must be constantly renewed by increasing knowledge, cultivated by activity, and weeded by repentance and good works. The rankest weeds in the garden may be found in the most fertile soil unless desirable crops are planted, watered, nurtured until the harvest. The prairie farmers in Canada have

learned that it is better to leave the native sod unploughed unless one is willing to follow through with continued cultivation and constant war on weeds." (*The Eternal Quest*, 425.)

**Matt 13:23 he that received seed into the good ground...bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty**

### **Neal A. Maxwell**

"How vital it is to be rooted and grounded in order to take the scorching heat that will be a part of that special summer of circumstances which precedes the second coming of the Son of Man in power and glory and majesty. A brief, scorching season, that summer will climax the centuries as the special moment among the millennia of mortal time.

"The unnourished and the shallow will not endure, because they cannot stand the heat...In heavy winds, even large pine trees are sometimes unexpectedly blown down, because though they appeared secure, their root systems were very shallow.

"People who are grounded in the Lord and His gospel have a deep and extensive root system. Having applied the various principles and truths of the gospel, they have specific faith from and experience with each principle in its turn. Their faith is not a generalized feeling, but reflects specific experience with interlocking principles.

"Being settled means that one refuses to be blown or 'moved away from the hope of the gospel.' (Colossians 1:23.) Neither surrounding secular skepticism nor vexing personal trials unsettle him. This settled condition is not the result of a single sudden act, of course. Nor is it an attainment followed by sweet repose, nor is it a static circumstance. Rather, it is like pounding one's pitons into the rocky and ascending surface of the windswept and sun-scorched straight and narrow path. Because one's pitons are anchored, he can inch forward, ever praying that he might 'come off conqueror,' led by 'the good shepherd' who knows the only way up and through the peaks of this probationary estate. (D&C 10:5; Alma 5:60.) When one is so anchored, he can then avoid the most common and fatal forms of falling away, which Jesus described as temptation, persecution, tribulation, and the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. (*We Will Prove Them Herewith*, 17-18.)

### **Elder Eldred G. Smith**

"We frequently refer to this parable in reference to missionary work. The gospel is preached to many, and to each the same is taught. The seed is the same-the same quality, the same strength, same value-yet some persons accept quickly, some more slowly, some not at all. Some fall away and leave the Church, as the parable declares. Some remain steadfast to the truth.

"Then the Lord describes those who are as the seed sown in good ground. Speaking of these he said some bear fruit or produce an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

"Membership alone not enough. This means, then, that mere membership alone is not enough-no, not even if you have a testimony of the divinity of the gospel-if you are not producing or bearing fruit. Speaking of those who receive the word, which means those who are members of the Church, some produced one hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. In which category are you? Where do you find yourself? Are you producing?" (*Conference Report, April 1969, Afternoon Meeting 80.*)

#### **Matt 13:25 his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat**

"... 'tares,' of the parable (Matt. 13:25) denotes the weed called 'bearded darnel' (*Lolium temulentum*), a widely-distributed grass, and the only species of the order that has deleterious properties. The bearded darnel before it comes into ear is very similar in appearance to wheat, and the roots of the two are often intertwined; hence the command that the 'tares' should be left till the harvest, lest while men plucked up the tares 'they should root up also the wheat with them.' This darnel is easily distinguishable from the wheat and barley when headed out, but when both are less developed, 'the closest scrutiny will often fail to detect it. Even the farmers, who in this country generally weed their fields, do not attempt to separate the one from the other. . . . The taste is bitter, and, when eaten separately, or even when diffused in ordinary bread, it causes dizziness, and often acts as a violent emetic.'" (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, 279)

#### **Matt 13:28 Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?**

#### **James E. Talmage**

"The teachings of our Lord breathe the spirit of forbearance and love even to enemies. He tolerated, though he could not approve, the practises of the

heathen in their idolatry, the Samaritans with their degenerate customs of worship, the luxury-loving Sadducees, and the law-bound Pharisees. Hatred was not countenanced even toward foes. His instructions were: 'Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust' (Matt 5:44-45). The Twelve were commanded to salute with their blessing every house at which they applied for hospitality. True, if the people rejected them and their message, retribution was to follow; but this visitation of cursing was to be reserved as a divine prerogative. In the Parable of the Tares, Christ taught the same lesson of forbearance; the hasty servants wanted to pluck out the weeds straightway, but were forbidden lest they root up the wheat also, and were assured that a separation would be effected in the time of harvest." (*Articles of Faith*, 362.)

**Matt 13:31 The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed**

### **Joseph Smith**

"And again, another parable put He forth unto them, having an allusion to the Kingdom that should be set up, just previous to or at the time of the harvest, which reads as follows-'The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but, when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.' Now we can discover plainly that this figure is given to represent the Church as it shall come forth in the last days...And it is truth, and it has sprouted and come forth out of the earth, and righteousness begins to look down from heaven, and God is sending down His powers, gifts and angels, to lodge in the branches thereof.

"The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a mustard seed. Behold, then is not this the Kingdom of Heaven that is raising its head in the last days in the majesty of its God, even the Church of the Latter-day Saints, like an impenetrable, immovable rock in the midst of the mighty deep, exposed to the storms and tempests of Satan, but has, thus far, remained steadfast, and is still braving the mountain waves of opposition." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 98-99)

### **Ezra Taft Benson**

"That the Church of Jesus Christ would have an inconspicuous beginning and then enjoy phenomenal growth was predicted. Jesus used the comparison of the small mustard seed to describe the early beginning of His Church. But eventually, He declared, that insignificant seed would become a great tree and many would find refuge in its branches. (See Matthew 13:31-32.)

"As men have attempted to assess the Church at a given period of time, in many instances they have not been able to see its forward movement and potential. The growth of the Church, like the growth of grass or trees, has been almost imperceptible to the eye, but little by little, line by line, precept by precept, the Church has matured." (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 169.)

**Matt 13:33 The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven**

**Matthias F. Cowley**

"The leaven must be a symbol of the Gospel, as its effects upon the meal to lighten and prepare it for use are like the effects of the Gospel of Christ upon the hearts of those who obey the same, viz., to refine and purify that men may be prepared for the kingdom of the Father. The three measures of meal doubtless are representative of three divisions of the house of Israel. These were, according to the Book of Mormon, the Jews in Palestine [who produced the Bible], the seed of Joseph on the Western hemisphere [who produced the Book of Mormon], and the ten tribes in the North country [whose leavening record is yet to come]. These all were visited by the Savior. They heard His voice and were taught of Him 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism,' that there might be 'one fold and one shepherd.'" (*Cowley's Talks on Doctrine*, 179.)

**Matt 13:35 I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world**

**Spencer W. Kimball**

"In these temples, by duly constituted authority, are men who may seal for all eternity, husbands and wives and their children. This is a fact even though unknown to the masses, and it is available as folks acquaint themselves with the need. This is one of the mysteries spoken of by the Redeemer, who taught the multitude in parables, saying:

"I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:35.)

"These priceless truths are not understood by the casual reader of the scriptures:

'For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.' (1 Cor. 2:11.)

'But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' (Ibid., 2:14.)

"It is inconceivable that otherwise intelligent, astute, and highly educated people should ignore or willfully disregard this great privilege. The doors can be unlocked. The gap can be bridged. And men can walk safely, securely to never-ending happiness, making their marriages timeless and eternal." (*Conference Report, October 1964, Afternoon Meeting 26.*)

**Matt 13:41 his angels...shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity**

## **Joseph Smith**

". . . the end of the world is the destruction of the wicked, the harvest and the end of the world have an allusion directly to the human family in the last days, instead of the earth, as many have imagined...as the servants of God go forth warning the nations, both priests and people, and as they harden their hearts and reject the light of truth, these first being delivered over to the buffetings of Satan, and the law and the testimony being closed up, as it was in the case of the Jews, they are left in darkness, and delivered over unto the day of burning; thus being bound up by their creeds, and their bands being made strong by their priests, are prepared for the fulfilment of the saying of the Savior-'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and . . . gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' (Matt. 13:41-42.) We understand that the work of gathering together of the wheat into barns or garners, is to take place while the tares are being bound over, and preparing for the day of burning; that after the day of burnings, the righteous shall shine forth like the sun, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear (HC 2:271)."

(*Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Alma P. Burton, 240.)

## **Ezra Taft Benson**

"In modern revelation, the Lord has said, 'Behold, verily I say unto you, the angels are crying unto the Lord day and night, who are ready and waiting to be sent forth to reap down the fields.' (D&C 86:5). He also said in this same revelation that he would 'let the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest is fully ripe; then ye shall first gather out the wheat from among the tares, and after the gathering of the wheat, behold and lo, the tares are bound in bundles, and the field remaineth to be burned.' (D&C 86:7.)

"The Lord has also said in our day in a revelation to the Prophet Joseph, 'I, the Lord, am angry with the wicked; I am holding my Spirit from the inhabitants of the earth. I have sworn in my wrath, and decreed wars upon the face of the earth, and the wicked shall slay the wicked, and fear shall come upon every man.' (D&C 63:32-33.)

"In section one of the Doctrine and Covenants, the introduction to the Lord's book of commandments, he made it clear that 'the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion.' (D&C 1:35.)

**President Joseph Fielding Smith** said in 1967, 'Peace *has* been taken from the earth. The devil *has* power over his own dominion. The Spirit of the Lord *has* been withdrawn. Not because the Lord desires to withdraw that Spirit, but because of the wickedness of mankind, it becomes necessary that the Spirit of the Lord be withdrawn.' ("The Predicted Judgments," *BYU Speeches of the Year*, March 21, 1967, p. 6.)

"Prophets of God, ancient and modern, have predicted that judgments would be poured out upon the world unless the people repented. Prophets and leaders of the Church from the days of the Prophet Joseph have spoken out clearly and courageously regarding the calamities, destructions, and plagues that would visit the earth unless the people repented of their evil ways.

**President Wilford Woodruff**, in an address in Brigham City, Utah, in June 1894, said:

'God has held the angels of destruction for many years lest they reap down the wheat with the tares. But I want to tell you now, those angels have left the portals of heaven, and they stand over this people and this nation now, and are hovering over the earth waiting to pour out the judgments. And from this very day they shall be poured out. Calamities and troubles are increasing in the earth and there is a meaning to these things. Remember this and reflect upon these matters. If you do your duty, and I do my duty, we shall have protection and shall pass through the afflictions in peace and safety. Read the scriptures and revelations.' (*Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p. 230.)

"Yes, peace has been taken from the earth, and 'if prophecy is to be fulfilled, there awaits the world a conflict more dreadful than any the world has yet seen.'" ("The Predicted Judgments," p. 9.)" (*God, Family, Country: Our Three Great Loyalties*, 92-3)

### **Joseph Fielding Smith**

"The coming of the Lord is nigh, and his anger is kindled against all who reject his word and his mercy. The day is soon to come when all who will not hear the voice of the Lord, or his servants, the prophets and apostles, shall be cut-off from among the people. This will be a terrible thing...We must not think that this has reference merely to those who reject the Gospel, but it is also to those who have professed the name of Christ but who are unwilling to heed the word of the servants of the Lord. They are to be cut off from among the people of the covenant. (3 Nephi 21:11.) The Savior declared that, 'The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity.' (Matt. 13:41.) His kingdom is the Church. Even today the cleansing process is going on, but eventually it will come with dreadful suddenness, and none who work iniquity shall escape." (*Church History and Modern Revelation*, 2: 26.)

**Matt 13:46 when he had found one pearl of great price**

### **LeGrand Richards**

"...as we travel in the missions, as President McKay has just done, down in the islands of the South Pacific, and down in Central America where I have just been, I interviewed some of the missionaries who are converts to the Church who have never been here in our midst, and when they tell us that they had nothing to live for until the gospel found them, and now they really

have something to live for, and bear witness that the time that they have been in the Church is the happiest time of all their lives, it makes you feel grateful to God that the Church has grown to such proportions that it can begin to reach out into all these foreign fields and carry to them the message of eternal truth as the Lord has revealed it.

"I told those good people down in that land that if I had come to them from the States with enough money to give each of them a million dollars, it would not be worth one hundredth part as much to them as the message that I had to bring to them. That represents the importance of our message. It is what Jesus called the 'pearl of great price.'

"He said that when a merchant man seeking goodly pearls found the 'pearl of great price,' he went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matt. 13:45-46.) And when one has acquired it, it is a thing that brings joy and peace and happiness and satisfaction into one's soul, the like of which he cannot find in any other way in the world." (*Conference Report, April 1955, Afternoon Meeting 121.*)

### **Delbert L. Stapley**

"This parable is most significant and meaningful; to appreciate its purpose is to understand the message. The desire of the merchantman dealing in pearls is to find the most priceless one of all. Therefore, he earnestly seeks and may travel extensively to world markets before he discovers the fabulous jewel which measures up to his expectations in standards of quality value, and iridescent beauty. Having found the pearl of great price, his joy and happiness is not complete until the gem becomes his personal property. To satisfy that desire, according to the parable, the merchant was willing to sacrifice all he had for ownership of the goodly pearl.

"Allegorically the Savior likens the kingdom of heaven unto the merchantman seeking goodly pearls, signifying that the true pearl of great price is God's kingdom which, for man to be happy and exalted, he must diligently seek.

"This parable accords with the Savior's teaching upon the Mount when he admonished:

**' . . . seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.'** (Matt 6:33.)

"When we relate the parable of the goodly pearls and the challenge of our Lord to seek first the kingdom of God, we receive a more comprehensive understanding of the parable dealing with the pearl of great price. Pearls have always held a high place among gems, and merchants have been active and diligent in seeking the largest and richest to be had. Unlike the man in the parable of the hidden treasure, who, with little or no effort on his part, found concealed in a field a precious treasure of great worth, the merchant devoted his whole energy to the quest for goodly pearls; to find and secure the best was his greatest ambition and business.

"When finally he beheld the pearl that excelled all others, he gladly sold all his other gems. Indeed, he sacrificed all that he had in gems and other possessions and purchased the pearl of great price. Seekers after truth may acquire much that is good and desirable but not find the greatest truth of all, the truth that shall save them and bring about their eternal exaltation and glory. Yet, if they seek persistently and with right intent and are really in quest of pearls of truth and righteousness and not imitations or substitutes, they shall find, for the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of truth, shall guide them." (*Conference Report, October 1965, First Day-Morning Meeting 12.*)

### **Mark E. Petersen**

"We have always felt that that merchant was an extremely wise man, because he was willing to give up all that he possessed in order to acquire the pearl of great price. But let me ask you, what would you have thought of that merchant had the parable been reversed and he had given up the pearl of great price in exchange for something of little or no value?

"We have some among us who are doing that very thing. In their own lives they reverse the parable of the Lord and they give up the pearl of great price for a fleeting fancy. They actually sell their birthright in the kingdom of God for less than a mess of pottage...[for instance] individuals who have been excommunicated from this Church. These excommunicants at one time were all members of the kingdom of God, and at one time they all possessed the pearl of great price. But each one of them has reversed that parable in his own life and has given up the pearl of great price with all its values and with all its blessings. What a pity! What a tragedy!" (*Conference Report, October 1945, Afternoon Meeting 88.*)

**Matt 13:47-48 the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind**

## **Bruce R. McConkie**

"When those whom God hath chosen to be 'fishers of men' (Matt. 4:19; Jer. 16:16) go forth preaching the gospel, they catch men of all sorts in the gospel net. Rich and poor, bond and free, Jew and Gentile, learned and ignorant, sincere and hypocritical, stable and wavering-men of all races, cultures, and backgrounds accept the gospel and seek its blessings. But all who are caught in the gospel net are not saved in the celestial kingdom; church membership alone gives no unconditional assurance of eternal life. (2 Ne. 31:16-21.) Rather, there will be a day of judgment, a day of sorting and dividing, a day when the wicked shall be cast out of the Church, 'out into the world to be burned.' For those then living the Second Coming will be an initial day of burning, sorting, and judgment (Matt. 25:31-46; D. & C. 63:54); for all men of all ages the ultimate day of sorting and dividing will occur, after all men have been raised from the dead, at the final great day of judgment. (2 Ne. 9:15-16.)

"**Joseph Smith**, in applying this parable to latter-day conditions, wrote: 'Behold the seed of Joseph, spreading forth the gospel net upon the face of the earth, gathering of every kind, that the good may be saved in vessels prepared for that purpose, and the angels will take care of the bad. So shall it be at the end of the world-the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire, and there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.' (*Teachings*, p. 102.)" (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 1: 302.)

## **Joseph Fielding Smith**

"Those who receive the fulness will be privileged to view the face of our Father. There will not be such an overwhelming number of the Latter-day Saints who will get there. President Francis M. Lyman many times has declared, and he had reason to declare, I believe, that if we save one-half of the Latter-day Saints, that is, with an exaltation in the celestial kingdom of God, we will be doing well. Not that the Lord is partial, not that he will draw the line as some will say, to keep people out. He would have every one of us go in if we would; but there are laws and ordinances that we must keep; if we do not observe the law we cannot enter.

"Many come into the Church, like fish that are gathered into the net, that have to be sorted and thrown out again or put into piles where they belong. And so it will be with us." (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2: 15.)

## Neal A. Maxwell

"Since life in the Church presents to us, painfully at times, our own defects as well as the defects of others, we are bound to be disappointed in ourselves and in others. We cannot expect it to be otherwise in a kingdom where not only does the 'net gather of every kind,' but those of 'every kind' are at every stage of spiritual development. (Matthew 13:47.) When people 'leave their nets straightway,' they come as they are. (See Matthew 4:20.) Though they are already in the initial process of changing, the luggage reflects their past. Hence, this is a developmental journey that requires patience, understanding, and meekness toward others who join the caravan, as, together, we disengage from one world and prepare ourselves for another." (*Meek and Lowly*, 88.)

**Matt 13:52 every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom...bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old**

The Bible Dictionary teaches us how to interpret parables, "It is important to distinguish between the interpretation of a parable and the application of a parable. The only true interpretation is the meaning the parable conveyed, or was meant to convey, when first spoken. The application of a parable may vary in every age and circumstance. But if the original meaning is to be grasped, it is important to consider its context and setting. " (BD, *Parables*) The following commentary discusses the correct interpretation of the parable and then provides a latter-day application.

Scribes were experts in the Law of Moses. If one were converted to the gospel of Christ they would be particularly privileged. Their treasures of spiritual knowledge would include the truths of the Old Testament and the treasures of the Christ's new message. Ironically, a misunderstanding of the old treasures often made the scribes blind to the new treasures of Jesus. The principle, however, has latter-day application. The Christian who is 'instructed unto the kingdom' (or converted to the Church) 'bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old'. The converted Presbyterian, Baptist, or Catholic may bring all the old truths of their discipleship to the kingdom of God and add the many wonderful treasures of the Restoration.

## George Albert Smith

"We have come not to take away from you the truth and virtue you possess. We have come not to find fault with you nor to criticize you...We are asking [you] to keep all the glorious truths that you have acquired in

your churches, that you have absorbed from your scriptures...Then let us sit down and share with you some of the things that have not yet come into your lives that have enriched our lives and made us happy." (*Sharing the Gospel with Others*, pp. 12-13, 217-19.)

### **Matt 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son?**

#### **Neal A. Maxwell**

"There was also the later time when He went-with what expectations or nostalgia we know not-back to 'his own country,' to Galilee's Nazareth and Capernaum. His neighbors heard Him read and comment upon the scriptures... Matthew says they were astonished at His 'wisdom and these mighty works' (Matthew 13:53-58).

"Yet all of this was discounted or dismissed by some because in their view, after all, 'Jesus was Joseph the carpenter's son.'

"In His sermon in one synagogue, Jesus boldly declared His Lordship. He was rejected, and some of the people even tried to throw Him off the brow of a hill. And this after His miraculous feeding of the five thousand, word of which cannot have escaped the attention of those present.

"Jesus' preachment in Capernaum was rejected because the son of Joseph, the carpenter, declared Himself to be the bread of life, sent down from heaven. (See John 6:35, 38.)

"Out of these episodes of rejection came Jesus' lamentation that 'a prophet is not without honour save in his own country, and in his own house.' (Matthew 13:57.)

"Familiarity got in the way of their recognizing Jesus' divinity.

"Instead of truly assessing Him, they used labels-'the carpenter's son'-to classify Him. Past proximity caused townsfolk and kinsmen alike to regard Him with indifference.

"In addition to the problems caused by familiarity and proximity, something else was present. Though subtle, this insight must not escape us. There was apparently no objection to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. However, the Sermon at Capernaum caused a violent reaction. Why? Because in the sermon at Capernaum, Jesus declared His Lordship! The more declarative

He was, the more restive His audience and the more attrition among His followers. The more specific His message, the more difficult He was to follow." (*Sermons Not Spoken*, 41.)

### **Howard W. Hunter**

"Those who rejected the Savior when he came to earth with the declaration that he was the Son of God said of him: 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' (Matthew 13:55.) When Joseph announced that he had seen a vision and had seen the Father and the Son, the query came to the minds and lips of the neighbors, the ministers, and the townspeople: 'Is not this the farmer's son?' Christ was persecuted and put to death, but time has been his vindicator. As with the carpenter's son, so it has been with the farmer's son. History does not indicate that prophets have been chosen for their great learning, for their acquisition of worldly culture, or for their social position. They have been called from the more humble stations of life; they were chosen before they were born." (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, 228.)

**Matt 13:57 A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house**

### **Spencer W. Kimball**

"Various excuses have been used over the centuries to dismiss these divine messengers. There have been denials because the prophet came from an obscure place. 'Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?' (John 1:46.) Jesus was also met with the question, 'Is not this the carpenter's son?' (Matthew 13:55.) By one means or another, the swiftest method of rejection of the holy prophets is to find a pretext, however false or absurd, to dismiss the man so that his message could also be dismissed. . . . Perhaps they judged Paul by the timbre of his voice or by his style of speech, not the truths uttered by him.

"We wonder how often hearers first rejected the prophets because they despised them, and finally despised the prophets even more because they had rejected them. . . .

"The trouble with rejection because of personal familiarity with the prophets is that the prophets are always somebody's son or somebody's neighbor. They are chosen from among the people, not transported from another

planet, dramatic as that would be! (*Ensign*, May 1978, pp. 76-77.)" (Neal A. Maxwell, *Things As They Really Are*, 65.)

### **Marvin J. Ashton**

"The concept that 'a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house' was a tragedy for these Galilean people. Shortly after this time Jesus left Nazareth and the Galilean ministry to concentrate most of his efforts in the southern part of the country nearer Jerusalem. Think of what miracles, manifestations, and healings of body and soul might have been enjoyed by these people if their faith had been sufficient to accept the great works of his faith.

"Sadly enough, I think we see this around us now. Someone who daily walks and talks and enjoys the presence of a Joseph Smith or a Spencer W. Kimball, but who is still essentially without faith, may have great difficulty in accepting them as prophets. I remember President Harold B. Lee telling the story of a very prominent man from New York who could not accept Joseph Smith as a prophet because he was 'too close to home.'

"Will we forfeit the harvest because we cannot accept direction, revelation, or counsel from some-one who just lives down the street, in the ward, or in the stake? Will we reject leadership from the church-man who is human, with frailties, and who has family members who may be quite human also?

"While we are struggling with an 'Is-not-this-the-carpenter's-son?' attitude, we may be missing the truth, the way, and the ultimate harvest." (*Ye Are My Friends*, 66-67.)

**Matt 13:58 he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief**

### **James E. Talmage**

"Faith is of itself a principle of power; and by its presence or absence, by its fulness or paucity, even the Lord was and is influenced, and in great measure controlled, in the bestowal or withholding of blessings; for He ministers according to law, and not with caprice or uncertainty. We read that at a certain time and place Jesus 'could there do no mighty work' because of the people's unbelief." (*Jesus the Christ*, 296)

### **Orson Pratt**

"It is the general opinion of modern churches that the principal object of miracles was to do away unbelief. But when Jesus went into His own country, among His old acquaintances, He marveled because of their unbelief (See "Mark 6:5). 'And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief' (Matthew 13). But according to the ideas of the false teachers of modern times, He should have performed greater works there, than anywhere else. As they consider signs to be for the convincing of the unbeliever therefore the greater the unbelief, the greater should be the signs. When he found His own countrymen so very unbelieving, He should according to modern notions concerning the object of signs, have performed far more splendid and magnificent miracles there, than He did in any other region where their unbelief was so great. But the facts of the case were directly the reverse. The greater the wickedness and unbelief of a people, the less were the mighty works performed among them. So among the Christian churches, as their unbelief increased, the mighty works decreased. And when the people became hardened in apostasy and unbelief, all mighty works ceased, and the salvation ceased also." (*Orson Pratt's Works*, 90.)