**Main Thought**  These parables explain the strategy of the enemy – IMITATION through FALSE Christians, FALSE Growth, and FALSE Doctrine.

**Review**

- These first seven parables reveal the MYSTERY (v. 11 – only here in the gospels; 13x by Paul; a truth not revealed in the OT) of the new form of the kingdom of God on earth – the Church Age.
- It is only now that Christ begins to speak of the CHURCH (Matt. 16:18 – first mention) and his DEATH (Matt. 16:21) because he had been rejected (John 1:11).

**The Parable of the Weeds – False Christians (24-30; 36-43).**

- The SOWER is the Son of Man (Christ – Mark 8:31), the FIELD is the world, and the GOOD SEED are sons of the kingdom (true Christians).
- The WEEDS are the sons of the devil (John 8:44) and the SOWER of the weeds is the Devil while the HARVESTERS are the angels.
- The devil uses IMITATION to attack the mystery form of the kingdom of God – the church. He plants counterfeit CHRISTIANS (2 Cor. 11:26), a counterfeit GOSPEL (Gal. 1:6-9), a counterfeit RIGHTEOUSNESS (Rom. 10:1-3), a counterfeit CHURCH (Rev. 2:9), even a counterfeit CHRIST (2 Thess. 2:3-4, 9).
- While we strive for purity inside the church, we are to let God judge those outside the church (Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 5:12-13).
- He will do this at the end of the age as the angels gather the weeds and burn them in a fiery furnace (Rev. 19:20), with weeping and gnashing of teeth (6x only in Matthew – 8:12; 13:42, 50, 22:13; 24:51; 25:30).

**The Parable of the Mustard Seed – False Growth (31-32).**

- Some understand these parables to refer to the growth (mustard seed) and expansion (yeast) of the church in this age (postmillennialists and amillennialists).
- It is best to view this in the context of enemies of the church for they are bracketed by the parable of the weeds explanation (premillennialists).
- BIRDS (4, 18) are almost always associated with danger or Satan.
- The TREE is the church in which the birds are perched (1 John 2:19). This is like the mixed multitude (Ex. 12:38) or rabble (Num. 11:4) who were with Israel.

**The Parable of the Yeast – False Doctrine (33-35).**

- Here again, yeast is almost always used as a symbol of evil like the false teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees (Matt. 16:12; Gal. 5:7-8).
- We are to get rid of the old yeast as at Passover (Ex. 12:15; 1 Cor. 5:6-8; Heb. 12:1).