

THE UNSHAKABLE KINGDOM #20

“The Leaven of the Kingdom”

I. Introduction

A. Boyhood Memories

1. Back in 1959, when I was 15 years old, the United States was in a Cold War with Communist Russia, when the Russian Premier, Nikita Khrushchev, threatened Americans with what amounted to an evil prophecy.

Nikita Khrushchev in 1959

“Your children’s children will live under communism. You Americans are so gullible. No, you won’t accept communism outright; but we’ll keep feeding you small doses of Socialism until you finally wake up and find that you already have Communism. We won’t have to fight you. We will weaken your economy until you fall like ripe fruit into our hands.”

2. Those were the days when we were practicing atom bomb drills in our public schools; learning to “Duck and Cover” at the sound of an alarm that a nuclear attack was imminent. (I remember thinking, “If an A-bomb hits the school how will hiding under a desk save us?”)

3. We thought the threat of communism and socialism was more from an atom bomb. But Khrushchev was telling us different.

a. He begins with a prophecy: “Your children’s children will live under communism”: he was telling us that the real threat was going to come many years later.

b. “You Americans are so gullible”. He tells us that our enemies would be counting on our gullibility.

“Gullible”

Easily persuaded to believe something. Easily deceived or cheated

c. Then he said, “No, you won’t accept communism outright”-Even at my young age I knew this was true! America knew we had a few Communists among us. But the number was small...very small.

4. But then comes the most important thing in his ‘prophecy’: he actually told us the strategy they would use against us...

Nikita Khrushchev

“We’ll keep feeding you small doses of Socialism until you wake up and find you have Communism. We won’t have to fight you. We will weaken your economy until you fall like ripe fruit into our hands.”

a. Here we have the Devil showing his hand; he does not have to ‘fight’ us with bombs; he will feed us ‘small doses of socialism’ that will weaken our economy until we fall into his hands!

5. America has spent tens of trillions of dollars in the arms race and on military defense systems; and we needed to; but the enemy’s goal has never been annihilation, it has been infiltration!

The enemy’s goal is not *annihilation*; it is *infiltration*. Socialists do not seek to destroy America from without; their goal is to conquer our culture from within.

6. In researching this teaching series I discovered the same strategy had been set forth by another Socialist, the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937).

a. Like Khrushchev, he prophesied that socialism would conquer America.

Antonio Gramsci

“Socialism is precisely the religion that must overwhelm Christianity. In the new order, Socialism will triumph by first capturing the culture via infiltration of schools, universities, churches, and the media.”

7. Notice that Socialism is a religion; not based on a belief in God but in atheism, the belief that there is no God.

a. Socialist strategy is to ‘overwhelm’ Christianity by winning the culture war; in the schools, universities, churches and the media.

8. Khrushchev said they would ‘keep feeding us small doses of socialism’; Gramsci says the same thing in a different way...

Antonio Gramsci

“We must enter into every civil, cultural and political activity in every nation, patiently leavening them thoroughly as one leavens bread. To change the culture will require a long march through the institutions—the arts, cinema, theater, schools, colleges, seminaries, newspapers, magazines, and the new electronic medium of radio.”

9. If you are a Christian who knows the Word of God you can already see how socialism has hijacked biblical principles when it speaks of ‘small doses of socialism’ and ‘leavening’ the culture thoroughly, ‘as one leavens bread.’

B. Perversions of the Parables

1. Khrushchev said the Communists would take us over by giving us ‘small doses of socialism’; but this is how Jesus said the Kingdom of God would come...:

Matthew 13:31-32

He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree..."

2. Gramsci said the Socialists would seek to...

Antonio Gramsci

“We must enter into every civil, cultural and political activity in every nation, patiently leavening them thoroughly as one leavens bread. To change the culture will require a long march through the institutions”

a. But Jesus said this is how the Kingdom of God would come!

Matthew 13:33

Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

3. It may seem the Socialists are doing better at leavening socialism than Christians are at leavening the Kingdom; but not so!

Matthew Henry

“The scope of these two parables is to show that the Kingdom will prevail and be successful by degrees, but silently and insensibly; the preaching of the

gospel is like leaven, and works like leaven in the hearts of those who receive it.”

Adam Clarke

“Both these parables are prophetic, and were intended to show how, from very small beginnings, the Gospel of Christ should pervade all the nations of the world, and fill them with righteousness and true holiness.”

4. Jesus brought the leaven of the Kingdom of God from heaven to earth and promised it would prevail! Like yeast...

The Biblical Illustrator

The kingdom is not an off-shoot from the world, but some sort of an importation into it: not an outgo, but an income. It is a new ingredient put into society.

a. Jesus promised the Kingdom would spread through the world like yeast spreads through bread dough.

Albert Barnes

This parable declared the fact that the gospel would greatly spread, and that piety in the heart would greatly increase. This states the way or mode in which it would be done. It is secret, silent, steady; pervading all the faculties of the soul and all the kingdoms of the world, as leaven, or yeast, though hidden in the flour, and though deposited only in one place, works silently until all the mass is brought under its influence.

The Biblical Illustrator

This parable describes the progressive influence of the truth of God within the heart, and also without in the world. Leaven works strongly, so does the Word on the thoughts and feelings. It works silently; so does the gospel secretly diffuse its influence through the soul. Leaven works permanently, imparting qualities which remain fixed in the substance which it penetrates.

5. The parable speaks of putting the leaven into ‘3 loaves’...

The Biblical Illustrator

I do not know that anything exact is denoted by the three measures. It may refer to the totality of the race as represented by the three sons of Noah by whom the earth was peopled; or perhaps to the totality of the individual man

as composed of body, mind, and spirit. At any rate, this three-foldness points, as usual, to entireness and completeness. The kingdom of heaven has come on earth to stay and to work a whole work.

6. The point of these parables is God's promise that His kingdom will prevail 'earth' as it is in heaven.

a. It will start small, like a mustard seed, and grow into the biggest plant in the garden.

b. It will come in like leaven, and works its way through the whole lump. In other words...

Theme

Jesus leavened the earth with the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and taught us that nothing can keep it from completing its work!

7. But this raises some fundamental questions:

- How does it happen that the socialists seem to be using the principles of the mustard seed and the leaven better than the Christians?
- Why does the Church seem to be losing the 'culture wars'?
- And why is America, as founded, seem to be slipping away?

8. The short answer is that the American church is asleep; and there are...

3 Signs of a Sleeping Church

- A defective view of history
- A defeatist view of the future
- **The result: An abdication of the responsibility to build a competing alternative culture; basically, to "Christianize" the world we live in**

II. 3 Signs of A Sleeping Church

A. A Defective View of History

Arthur W. Pink

"History seen in fragments denies God, but history as a whole is seen to be His story."

1. Our secular schools teach a humanistic view of history, with facts and dates; but the Christian worldview sees history as the story of God and man as His creation.

2. A true view of history affirms the words of Jesus; the entrance of the Kingdom changes the world and everything in it for the better.

3. It began with a 'mustard seed'; the Son of God came to earth and sowed the Word of God into the world.

a. He came as a babe; a small one

b. He had no marks of royalty or pedigree; no formal education

c. He had only 12 followers; and one of them went bad

d. He ministered in a culture where the Romans ruled and God's people were backslidden.

4. But look what's happened since! The Gospel has changed the world!

5. The nations that have embraced the Gospel have been blessed; those who have rejected it have suffered. Those who have supported Israel have prospered. But...

Jerry E. Smith

The history of those who have persecuted Israel is not good. Where is the Babylonian Empire, the Assyrian Empire, the Greek Empire, the Roman Empire, the Third Reich? They are gone, but tiny Israel exists today and forever. If a nation (empire) wishes to continue existing, it must be, or become, an ally of Israel (Gen 12:3).

6. History teaches us the Church does not lose...it wins! But a sleeping church has a defective view of history which produces...

B. A Defeatist View of the Future

1. It is remarkable that the prevailing view of the socialists is that they are going to win while the prevailing view of much of the Church is that we are going to lose.

2. The vast majority of Christians in America are looking for the Antichrist more than they are looking for the true Christ.

3. The problem is that American Christians have drunk deeply from the waters of dispensationalist writers who teach the future defeat of the Church and our only hope is the 2nd coming.

a. Consider Hal Lindsey's best-selling book, "The Late Great Planet Earth". No book in human history has done more to paralyze the work of the Kingdom than this one.

Hal Lindsey, The Late Great Planet Earth (1970)

"The church is not in the business of taking anything away from Satan but the souls of men. The world is a sinking Titanic ripe for judgment."

(No wonder reading this writer has demotivated millions of Christians from engaging in the culture wars! If you're on the Titanic why would you want to rearrange the deck chairs?)

"We should be living like persons who don't expect to be around much longer."

b. I have been warning people about this false prophet since the early 80's but Christians still buy his books and follow him on TV. The book has sold 35 million copies and made Lindsey a multi-millionaire. But even the world knows he is a false prophet!

Erin A. Smith, National Endowment for the Humanities, Winter, 2017

"Every 3 years Hal Lindsay writes a new book denoting how the world will end in 5 years. Each subsequent book explains how he WASN'T wrong in the previous book and the world will really end in 5 years. He has followed this pattern for 3 decades and is now acknowledged as "the fore-most authority on Biblical prophecy in the world today." I'm an electrician. If I had been doing my job POORLY and WRONG for 30 years I doubt I would be "the foremost authority". In fact, I dare say I would have ceased to make a living in the first 10 years."

c. Another gloom and doomer who makes a living peddling pessimism is....

Charles C. Ryrie, "The Living End" (1976)

"This world is not going to get any easier to live in. Almost unbelievably hard times lie ahead. Indeed, Jesus said that these coming days will be uniquely

terrible. Nothing in all the previous history of the world can compare with what lies in store for mankind.”

d. Jesus did warn of coming judgment; but He also told us “Occupy” or “Engage in business” until He comes”! This would include confronting the culture. But ‘not so’ says...

John F. MacArthur, The Vanishing Conscience (2005)

“‘Reclaiming’ the culture is a pointless, futile exercise. I am convinced we are living in a post-Christian society—a civilization that exists under God’s judgment.”

4. Reading this junk explains why the socialists are succeeding while the Christians are retreating!

Gary DeMar

For 40 years I have been warning Christians about prophetic beliefs that immobilize Christians. No one knows how many Christians have dropped out of the culture war because they are convinced that we are living in the last days.

Gary DeMar

“The main reason anti-Christian civilizationists survive and seem to thrive is that Christians have not engaged with and built a competing alternative culture. Moreover, many Christians don’t believe there can be a Christian civilization.”

5. Our nation, as founded, is hanging by a thread while doom and gloom believers are saying this on the internet:

- “I am voting for Joe Biden because I believe Trump is working against God’s Plans. Things are supposed to get worse in the last days, not better”
- “It may work out better for Christians to vote for Biden because it would hasten Jesus’ return and His second coming and Christians would be taken out of this mess.”
- “Some of my friends won’t vote for Biden because he is pro-abortion. But they won’t vote for Trump either. They say, “Trump’s intentions are good, but he’s postponing the rapture!”

6. AFA.net says 39 million eligible **Christian** voters **did not vote** or were **not** registered to **vote** in 2012. Half did not vote in 2016. Why?

Gary DeMar

There are many Christians who will not participate in civilization-building efforts that include politics because they believe (or have been taught to believe) that politics is outside the realm of what constitutes a Christian worldview. “Politics is dirty,” “Jesus didn’t get mixed up in politics,” “Politics is about law, and Christianity is about grace,” “Government is not our savior; Jesus is,” “Jesus said that His kingdom is not of this world,” “The Christian’s only task is to preach the gospel,” and so many more myths.

III. Close

A. What’s Next?

1. Many of God’s people believe Jesus is coming back any minute. (I hope they’re right; all I know is that He IS coming back)

2. Many of God’s people are into gloom and doom; I admit; things are bad. But what if the early Church, or the Church throughout history had given up when things went bad?

3. When I teach on the mustard seed or the leaven of the Kingdom filling the earth before the 2nd coming some tell me that there’s not one thing yet to be fulfilled before He does come back. I would offer these scriptures:

UNFULFILLED SCRIPTURE PROPHECIES

Psalm 2:7-8

'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession.

Psalm 22:27-28

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He rules over the nations.

Psalm 65:2

O You who hear prayer, to You all flesh will come.

Psalm 66:3-4

Say to God, "How awesome are Your works! Through the greatness of Your power Your enemies shall submit themselves to You. All the earth shall worship You and sing praises to You; they shall sing praises to Your name."

Psalm 72:8

He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, And from the River to the ends of the earth.

Psalm 72:11

Yes, all kings shall fall down before Him; All nations shall serve Him.

Psalm 86:9

All nations whom You have made shall come and worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.

Psalm 138:4

All the kings of the earth shall praise You, O Lord, when they hear the words of Your mouth.

Isaiah 2:2

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow to it.

Isaiah 9:6-7

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end...

Isaiah 11:9

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

Micah 4:1-2

Now it shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted

above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, and we shall walk in His paths."

Micah 5:2-5

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting" ...And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth..."

Habakkuk 2:12-14

Woe to him who builds a town with bloodshed, who establishes a city by iniquity! Behold, is it not of the Lord of hosts that the peoples labor to feed the fire, and nations weary themselves in vain? For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

Zephaniah 3:8-9

"Therefore wait for Me," says the Lord, "until the day I rise up for plunder; My determination is to gather the nations to My assembly of kingdoms, to pour on them My indignation, all My fierce anger; all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of My jealousy. For then I will restore to the peoples a pure language, that they all may call on the name of the Lord, to serve Him with one accord."

Malachi 1:11

For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; in every place incense shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," says the Lord of hosts.

4. Finally, what about the Great Commission? Is this not a prophecy?

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

a. Is the job done? Have we disciple the nations? Has Jesus changes His mind?

5. And one more word to make you think about when the ‘end’ will really come:

Matthew 24:14

And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come.

6. Have we preached the Gospel OF THE KINGDOM in all nations? I suggest we haven’t even done that yet in America!

7. It all boils down to the real division in the church: not Protestant or Catholic; denominational or non-denominational; charismatic or non-charismatic. The real division is: OPTIMIST OR PESSIMIST?

8. I choose the latter; I choose to believe in the “Leaven of the Kingdom”.

Matthew 13:33

"The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

Title