

Matthew Lesson 13

Matthew Chapter 13

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Memory verses for this week: *John 21:25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we studied about the unpardonable sin which is blaspheming the Holy Spirit. If we are being brought under conviction by the Holy Spirit to be saved, we need to come to Christ right then. Today is the day of salvation, and if you put it off one day, you might never have another chance.

This week we begin a study of 7 parables. They all are closely related and seem to be delivered by Christ on the same day. They relate to the period of time between Christ's rejection and his final return to setup His kingdom. Parables are illustrations which make spiritual truth more plain to the hearer. These parables have been designated as the "Mysteries of the Kingdom".

I. The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven

Mat 13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

Mat 13:2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Matthew introduces this interesting chapter noting, "*The same day went Jesus out of the house,*" Once again, an unspecified house is mentioned. The general location likely is still in the region of Capernaum, though in 12:15, Matthew noted that Jesus had departed thence. The "same day" evidently refers to the same day wherein the events in the latter portion of chapter 12 took place.

It has been called 'the busy day' because of all which was accomplished thereon. Capernaum is located on the north shore of Galilee. To the south and west of Capernaum, there is a small bay or inlet along the shore of the lake. It is thought that it was at this place that Jesus got into a boat while the crowds lined the shore in a great, natural amphitheater. From there, He taught the seven parables recorded in this chapter. Each pertains to the kingdom of God.

Jesus was the master teacher. As he went out the sea side, great multitudes gathered together with him so that they might hear him speak. Mysteries of the Kingdom were about to be told, and Christ has to go onto a ship so that all on the

shore might see him and hear what he had to say. A 'mystery' according to the New Testament usage, does not refer to something that cannot be understood, but it denotes a truth which once was hidden but now is revealed. As these multitudes gathered, it gave Christ the opportunity to present the truths from the Word of God. All of God's word is truth, and we can trust it and believe it.

Mat 13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

Mat 13:4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Mat 13:5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

Mat 13:6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

Mat 13:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

Mat 13:8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Mat 13:9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This first parable speaks of the sower.

Although our Lord gives several parables in this chapter, He interprets only two of them: the parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and tares. His interpretation is a guide to the symbolism in the other parables. For instance, in this parable of the sower, the birds represent Satan. Now when He uses the symbol of birds in another parable, we may be sure that they do not represent something good. We need to be consistent and follow our Lord's interpretation.

In verse 4, we read about the way side soil which is a hard soil that leaves the seeds exposed to the birds. Before they seeds could ever sprout or take root, the fowls came forth and devoured the seed. Verse 6 speaks of the sees that fell on stony soil. The soil did not produce because of the heat and the shallowness of the soil. If you've ever raised vegetables or flowers, you have to have good deep soil to raise plants. And the ground has to be cleared of weeds. Verse 7 talks of seeds falling among thorns, and when they did sprout, the thorns choked them out. Finally verse 8 speaks of good ground.. fertile ground that could put forth plants and sustain them. Some gave forth a hundred fold, some sixty, and some thirty. Only good ground can produce fruit. These sayings were given that we might learn, and verse 8 warns us to listen and understand.

The first of the parables of this chapter is that of the sower and the seed. In the parable of the sower and the seed, Jesus spoke of four categories:

- (1) The wayside where the fowls devoured it,
- (2) Rocky ground in which there was no depth,
- (3) Weeds and thorns which choked the seed,
- (4) Good ground that brought forth much fruit.

Ancient farmers would walk through their fields with a bag of seed slung over their shoulder. They would 'broadcast' the seed by throwing it manually in a semicircular pattern as they went through each field. In this case, it would seem that the farmer (sower) was planting wheat or some other type of grain. Such fields usually were not large and frequently had a path or 'road' running along at least one side. This wayside was compacted from traffic. Seed falling thereon would only lay upon the surface, easy prey for birds.

The geology of Israel is such that ledge rock (bedrock) often lies just beneath shallow soil. In the parable Jesus told, evidently one portion of the field was underlain with such rock. The soil above it would be hotter and drier than the rest because of the shallowness of the soil. Other portions of the field were infested with weeds, specifically thorn plants. Some portions of the field were of good soil not compacted, not under laid with rock, and not full of thorns.

It should be noted that in three of the four categories of soil, the seed germinated and sprang to life. The greater point of the parable will be why some bring forth fruit and others do not.

Jesus again admonished His hearers, *"Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."*

The thought is take note and pay attention. There is more to what you have heard than might at first be suspected.

J. Vernon McGee said this about the seed that failed to take root.

With these folk the world crowds out the Word of God. The Devil got the wayside folk, and the flesh took care of the rocky-ground folk, but the world chokes out the Word for this class of hearers. The cares of the world move in. Sometimes it is poverty, and other times it is the deceitfulness of riches. It is quite interesting that folk at each end of the social spectrum—extreme poverty and extreme prosperity—are folk who are the most difficult to reach for Christ. I find that a great many people have let the cares of the world crowd out the Word of God. These three types of soil do not represent three types of believers—they are not believers at all! They have heard the Word and have only professed to receive it. My friend,

it is well for all of us to examine ourselves to see whether or not we are really in the faith.

II. The Reason for Speaking in Parables

Mat 13:10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

Mat 13:11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

The apostles question why Jesus spoke to them in parables. This was a new method of teaching and something they were not familiar. David prophesied in Psalms that Jesus would come and teach with parables.

Psalm, 78:2, I will open my mouth in a parable.

A parable is an illustration teaching a specific truth. Jesus uses the method to teach the disciples, yet the specific lesson was hidden from the unbelieving Pharisees. To know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven was given only to believers. There are many things that we as Christians understand that the world desires to know, but can not. Even the Word of God is not clear to the lost man or woman, which probably explains why someone tries to write a new 'version' of the bible each month. The person without the Holy Spirit can not discern the Word of God.

1 Cor 2:14 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.

When Jesus was asked why He taught in parables rather than directly, He alluded to Isaiah's prophecy that God would spiritually blind the hardened hearts of unbelieving Israel.

Isa 6:9 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Isa 6:10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.

There are consequences to ongoing rejection and disobedience to God. Sin brought on human depravity which cultivates disobedience and rebellion. Due to their depraved nature and unwillingness to repent, God removed their ability to understand. Jesus' reference to one having more in opposition to one who did not (and taking away from him), without a doubt in the context, is a reference to Israel.

God had given to them light, grace, and blessing down through the centuries. For the most part, Israel had taken for granted God's blessing, ignored Him, and rejected His truth. They, of all people, had been blessed by God and yet had turned their backs on Him. God through Jesus was speaking to them in parables which for the most part they did not understand.

For those few whose hearts were opened to the Savior, to them even more was given. However, for the many whose hearts were hardened and oblivious to the truth, from them would be taken away even what little understanding they had. It was a harsh reality. Israel had so offended the Lord that now He spoke to them indirectly in parables speaking only directly to those whose hearts were opened to Him.

Mat 13:12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Mat 13:13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

The Pharisees could hear the words Jesus said, but they could not understand the words. They did not see nor hear the truth. God promises that if we desire to know more, He will give that to us. And if we have no desire to understand, He can oblige you with that also. Verse 12 says 'but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

Mat 13:14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

Mat 13:15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and 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.

The multitudes heard but did not understand. They saw and did not perceive. It was a direct fulfillment of the ancient warning of God through the prophet Isaiah. (Isaiah 6:9-10). listed above.

Israel had rejected the simple message of both John and Jesus: repent. There was nothing complicated about that. Because of that rejection, Jesus now spoke to them in less than direct parables. They heard but did not understand. They were reaping the harsh consequences of their longstanding sinful attitude.

This inability of the Pharisees to understand was a fulfillment of prophecy from Isaiah. They could hear the words, but they could not understand. They could see, but they could not perceive. Sadly, far too many in the world are this way today. Our responsibility is to lead those to Christ that they may understand and perceive. It says the people's heart was waxed gross and their ears were dull of hearing. Do we have a warning that many will be like this in these last days?

2 Tim 4:3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

2 Tim 4:4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

In many pulpits today, you won't hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ proclaimed. Many will not preach against sin like they were commissioned to do. Many good stories will be told and some book reports will be read. God help us to never get away from doing what God told the church to do, and that is to reach the lost with the gospel, and then teach them 'to observe all things' that they may have fruitful abundant lives and become soul winners also.

Mat 13:16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

Mat 13:17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

The disciples were really blessed to be a part of this teaching. Jesus tells them that they are seeing things that the prophets of old had longed to see. These were seeing the true Messiah teach the truths like no other ever could.

Jesus had a blessing for His disciples in the midst of the gloom. They were receptive to their Lord and therefore He saw to it that they would understand and perceive the truth. Jesus pointed out to the disciples the blessings they were witnessing.

Prophets and righteous men from centuries past had longed to see and hear what they were witnessing. These twelve men were blessed in seeing prophecy fulfilled before their very eyes. They were hearing truth uttered which few had been privileged to hear through the ages. Because their hearts were

open and they were willing to obey their Lord, He revealed to them profound and blessed truth to which Israel at large was oblivious. They were a uniquely privileged few.

III. The parable of the Sower Interpreted

Mat 13:18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

Mat 13:19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

Mat 13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

Mat 13:21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

Mat 13:22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

Mat 13:23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Jesus began to explain to them the parable of the sower and the seed. It should be pointed out that the major thrust of this parable is why many of God's people never bear much fruit. Jesus thus noted the first category of the parable. In regard to the wayside, Jesus pointed out that Satan will deflect interest in the things of God by the hectic, busy pace in which so many live. Satan is a direct adversary in squelching interest in the things of God.

In this category, the subject evidently is never saved. Even as a pathway through a garden or field is compacted and not receptive for seed, hearts which are hardened by sin and distractions of the world never understand the gospel nor receive Christ. No new birth ever takes place. In the case of the stony ground, people do hear and receive the Word, but because they lack depth of character, as soon as trouble or opposition arises over being a Christian, they give up and fade away.

(1) Though evidently saved, they bear no fruit for the Savior. Even as soil which is underlaid with ledge rock is shallow, so are these.

(2) They receive the gospel and are born again. But because they lack root, when trouble comes, they quit. Hence, they never bring forth fruit for Christ.

(3) The essence of Christian character is the discipline to do as we ought. Many in life have never developed that virtue. True Christianity is not easy so they quit.

Next, the seed sown among the thorns springs up. Here, the seed germinated and a new life sprang forth. The person quite evidently was born again. However, because of distractions by the *things* of life, the seed is choked and though alive never brings forth much fruit. Though saved, this type of Christian becomes so involved in the activities of this world that he or she never brings forth much fruit for God. Legion is their number. These are saved, but fruitless.

Next, the Lord explains the seed that fell on good ground. Here, a receptive heart hears the gospel and receives Christ. There isn't the obstacle of a hardened heart. There is not the lack of character or conflicting activities. The seed of the gospel springs up and bears much fruit. In some cases, the seed produces a yield of thirty, sixty, and even one-hundred fold.

The application is to people who hear the gospel, understand it, and proceed to bring forth much fruit for God. The fruit likely is in other people won to Christ over one's lifetime. The lesson is to be careful of being too busy for God; of developing depth of character; of not becoming entangled with the affairs of this life so that we might bring forth fruit for God.

Jesus interprets each of the types of soil. The first wayside soil is like one that hears and never understands it due to Satan catching it away before it comes into the heart of the hearing. The stony soil speaks of those that hear the Gospel and are excited about it, but never is truly saved. The first sign of trial causes them to be offended and they leave. There are many good time 'christians' that will only be around when good things are going on. But true Christians will be out in bad weather, in the heat, to the possible threat of death. Many today overseas put their lives on the line to go to church. Would we come today if we knew we might be shot? It would take the grace of God, but I believe the true believer has such a desire to please God that they have to come. The thorny ground seeds (verse 22) are like those who hear the word and perhaps believe, but the cares of this world are more important to them than Jesus. The rich young ruler was like those.

Mat 19:16 And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

Mat 19:17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

Mat 19:18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

Mat 19:19 Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself.

Mat 19:20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

Mat 19:21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.

Mat 19:22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Jesus was not wanting this young man's money... he was simply pointing out how that he had not really kept all of the law. The very first commandment was to put God first. His possessions were more important to him than serving God.

Verse 23 gives us the interpretation of the good ground hearers. These are they who really do get saved, and they become fruit bearers. Some will bring a 100 to Christ, some 60, some 30. But if we are saved, we will be fruitful. Will every Christian lead another to Christ? I think that is definitely God's perfect will for our lives. Some might lead over 1,000. But whatever we do, it is simply following the Lord's Will for our lives, because we are nothing in ourselves. It is God that gives the increase.

1 Cor 3:5 Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

1 Cor 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

1 Cor 3:7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

1 Cor 3:8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

1 Cor 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

IV. The Second Mystery – The Tares Among the Wheat

Mat 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

Mat 13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

We see in the same field, tares and wheat were sown. They were sown by different people... the good man (God) plants good seed, whereas the enemy (Satan) comes in and plants bad seed. After Satan sows his tares he goes on his way.

Mat 13:26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

Mat 13:27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

Mat 13:28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

Mat 13:29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Mat 13:30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Here is the parable of the tares and the wheat. It is explained in verses 36-43. The story is simple. Tares are false wheat. They are an undesirable weed, which in its early stages looks like wheat. When mature, it produces a black, noxious grain. Here, an enemy sowed this counterfeit seed while the husbandman slept. When the tares became evident, the husbandman counseled it would be better to leave them than try and root them out and damage the good crop. At harvest they would be gathered out and burned. The explanation of this is forthcoming in verse 36. It is significant that this is a parable of the kingdom of heaven and is thus a kingdom parable. Understanding that will provide insight into the interpretation thereof.

Jesus tells them that men were not permitted to go out and take out the tares, lest they harm the wheat by uprooting it. Wheat has short roots, and can easily be pulled up. The tares and the wheat look a lot alike, sort of the way wild rye looks here in Texas in our wheat. You have to look carefully to tell the tares from the wheat. Jesus says that the reapers will first bind the tares into bundles and burn them, but the wheat will be taken into the barn. The angels will separate the lost from the saved. The lost will be burned, the saved will go to heaven.

I want to read you what Matthew Henry said about this last part of the parable.

At the end of the world, there will be a great harvest-day, a day of judgment; at harvest all is ripe and ready to be cut down: both good and bad are ripe at the great-day, Rev. 6:11. It is the harvest of the earth, Rev. 14:15. At harvest the reapers cut down all before them; not a field, not a corner, is left behind; so at the great day all must be judged (Rev. 20:12, 13); God has set a harvest (Hos. 6:11), and it shall not fail, Gen. 8:22. At harvest every man reaps as he sowed; every man's ground, and seed, and skill, and industry, will be manifested: see Gal. 6:7, 8. Then they who sowed precious seed, will come again with rejoicing (Ps. 126:5,

6), with the joy of harvest (Isa. 9:3); when the sluggard, who would not plough by reason of cold, shall beg, and have nothing (Prov. 20:4); shall cry, Lord, Lord, but in vain; when the harvest of those who sowed to the flesh, shall be a day of grief, and of desperate sorrow, Isa. 17:11.

(7.) The reapers are the angels: they shall be employed, in the great day, in executing Christ's righteous sentences, both of approbation and condemnation, as ministers of his justice, ch. 25:31. The angels are skilful, strong, and swift, obedient servants to Christ, holy enemies to the wicked, and faithful friends to all the saints, and therefore fit to be thus employed. He that reapeth receiveth wages, and the angels will not be unpaid for their attendance; for he that soweth, and he that reapeth, shall rejoice together (Jn. 4:36); that is joy in heaven in the presence of the angels of God.

V. Parable of the Mustard Seed

Mat 13:31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Mat 13:32 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.

The parable of the mustard seed is the next parable of the kingdom of heaven presented by Jesus. Indeed mustard seeds are small and some varieties can produce a large, tree-like plant. The application of the parable is found in the context of the kingdom.

One simple application of the parable is how something so small as one's faith can grow into a great spiritual work. In the context, the thought may be that through obscure men (Seth, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Isaac, Samuel, etc.), God in time will produce a kingdom which will cover the entire earth. That of course will be fulfilled in the millennial reign of Christ. The birds of the air may refer to the gentile nations of the earth being a part of the kingdom and living therein.

The kingdom of God will be the greatest kingdom ever when Christ returns and establishes it in the Millennium. The kingdom began through godly men in ages past whom the world knew not. Moreover, as a concept, the kingdom long promised to Israel presently is nothing more than a tiny seed. When Christ returns, it will spring forth into the mightiest kingdom this world has ever seen, encompassing every nation on the earth.

Our understanding of this third parable hinges upon us correctly interpreting the three central figures in the parable.

1. The mustard seed

2. The great tree from which it sprang from
3. The birds of the air which came and lodged in its branches.

Jesus says that the kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed. In this parable, the kingdom of heaven speaks of Christendom. This is the combination of all people who profess to be Christians. That which is represented by the seed and it becoming a tree is not a people who are strangers and pilgrims down here, but a system whose roots lie deeply in the earth and which aim at greatness and expansion in the world. We have a lot of religious organizations whose goal seems to be to get bigger and have larger numbers for which they can claim. Many are tied to ecumenical movements wanting to see the one world church come into existence. In verse 32, Christ describes a religious system that becomes great on the earth. (It becomes the tree.) The mustard seed and tree speak of the spread of Christendom... the so-called one world church that so many preach about today. Has many terms to describe it, but some of its titles are the 'universal and invisible one world church.' There is no such church mentioned in scripture. Every instance of the church was a local called out body of believers who covenant together to spread the gospel and to worship the Lord. The birds speak of evil ones. These evil ones come and lodge in the tree of Christendom. These are made of up false religious leaders and nations who do not truly believe in God. But they want to be part of the big picture of religion.

VI. The Parable of Leaven

Mat 13:33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Jesus presented the fourth kingdom parable. Leaven in the Bible frequently refers to the permeating aspects of sin. Though the kingdom of God will be a reign of righteousness, yet there will still be sinful people born during that time. Revelation 20:7-9 records how at the end of the Millennium, there will be a Satan led revolt against God. This evidently is a parable thereof.

The leaven of sin, though restrained, will still remain during that time. By the end of the Millennium, sadly, the entire kingdom evidently will have been permeated with the sin of revolt even as a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough. God will allow that revolt to spring forth upon Satan's release at the battle of Gog and Magog. Sin and Satan at that time will be utterly defeated once and for all.

Mat 13:34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

Mat 13:35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

There are a lot of false teaching on this parable. Some teach that the women is spreading the gospel until all come to know Christ. That is far from the truth. Anytime leaven is mentioned in the scriptures, it speaks of (or typifies sin.) This fourth parable reveals the internal aspect and secret corruption of the kingdom. The leaven is a symbol of corrupting evil, and the meal stands for the pure truth of God. The leaven certainly does not represent the gospel because the parable is a secret and the gospel has never been a secret. Even Abraham had the gospel preached unto him.

Gal 3:8 And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Gal 3:9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

When Paul was dealing with Festus and King Agrippa, he pointed out that the things that happened to Christ were not hidden.

Acts 26:24 And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

Acts 26:25 But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

Acts 26:26 For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

In this parable, the meal stands for the true doctrine of Jesus Christ. You notice that the women hides the leaven in the meal. The meal wasn't removed, nor did the leaven replace the meal. There are many churches today that have removed the true doctrines of Christ from their pulpits as I mentioned last week. But rather than replacing it, they mix in the leaven and corrupt the whole. If you put leaven (sin) in with the gospel, you do not have the true gospel.

Paul told the Corinthian church that he and his fellow laborers did not corrupt the gospel with false teachings.

2 Cor 2:14 Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

2 Cor 2:15 For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:

2 Cor 2:16 To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?

2 Cor 2:17 For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.

It is important to pay attention to the woman in this parable. The woman refers to the Papacy and in general to all those who corrupt God's Word. I heard David Jeremiah preaching last week on the importance of staying with the word of God and he used the example over in Jeremiah about the king who didn't like what Jeremiah prophesied, so he took a little knife and cut out what he didn't like.

Jer 36:21 So the king sent Jehudi to fetch the roll: and he took it out of Elishama the scribe's chamber. And Jehudi read it in the ears of the king, and in the ears of all the princes which stood beside the king.

Jer 36:22 Now the king sat in the winterhouse in the ninth month: and there was a fire on the hearth burning before him.

Jer 36:23 And it came to pass, that when Jehudi had read three or four leaves, he cut it with the penknife, and cast it into the fire that was on the hearth, until all the roll was consumed in the fire that was on the hearth.

Brother Jeremiah said we may not have people today openly cutting up God's Word, but by not preaching the whole truth, they are effectively slicing up God's Word and picking and choosing to preach on just what they like ... those things that won't condemn sin or make them or their people feel bad. Those people who do this are not worthy to be in the ministry, and it makes you question whether they were truly called by God to preach.

The woman in the parable is acting dishonestly and deceitfully. She took and hid the leaven in the meal. Something that should never have been in God's meal. Do we have any in today's world doing this? Of course we have... you can turn on your TV and perhaps half of the television evangelists use God's word improperly for personal gain. Or they preach the soft things that tickle people's ears as Brother Jeremiah mentioned. This prosperity Christianity that many preach is not biblical. God never promised us we'd be rich down here of physical blessings, but he did promise to make us rich spiritually and to be with us every step of our way in our battles here on earth.

Verse 34 and 35 speak of how this teaching of parables by Christ was a fulfillment of scripture which we read last week over in Isaiah.

Matthew pauses in the midst of this lengthy string of parables to comment.

"All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

The thought harkens back to what Jesus explained to His disciples in 13:10-15. Jesus taught the masses of Israel obliquely through parables. He taught His disciples directly. Greater Israel, and official Israel in particular, had witnessed the miracles of Jesus. They also had heard His simple message: repent. They tragically had already rejected both Him and His message. Therefore,

Jesus now taught them in oblique parables. They were hearing but did not understand and seeing but not perceiving. The prophecy here quoted is from Psalm 78:2.

VII. The Second Mystery Explained

Mat 13:36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

Consistent with His intention of teaching obliquely to Israel but directly to His disciples, Jesus sent the multitudes away for the day. He had already explained the parable of the sower and the seed to them. The disciples therefore asked Jesus to explain the second of the four parables—that of the tares in the field.

Mat 13:37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

Mat 13:38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

Mat 13:39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

Christ's disciples come to him and want the second parable explained. He identifies the sower (Christ), the field (the world), and the tares (which are the lost) and the enemy which is Satan.

Matthew Henry said this about the disciples request to have the parable explained.

The disciples' request to their Master was, Declare unto us the parable of the tares. This implied an acknowledgement of their ignorance, which they were not ashamed to make. It is probable they apprehended the general scope of the parable, but they desired to understand it more particularly, and to be assured that they took it right. Note, Those are rightly disposed for Christ's teaching, that are sensible of their ignorance, and sincerely desirous to be taught. He will teach the humble (Ps. 25:8, 9), but will for this be enquired of. If any man lack instruction, let him ask it of God.

Mat 13:40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Mat 13:41 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;

Mat 13:42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Mat 13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Herein is the explanation of the tares and the wheat. Again, the key to understanding the parable is remembering that the context is of the kingdom, not the church. The thought is similar to the parable of the leaven. Though only born-again people will be allowed to enter the Millennium at its inception, those who so enter in a natural body will produce children. These will still have a sinful nature.

Some will be saved during the kingdom age, but some will not. Those who remain unregenerate likely are the tares sowed in the kingdom. At the end of the Millennium, Satan will be released and he quickly will find those who have never been born again during the Millennium. Though they initially seemed to be God's people, their true colors will show and they, with Satan, will revolt.

God's reaction is to send angels throughout His kingdom who will gather these to judgment. In collating this with Revelation 20:7-9, apparently the angels of God in one way or another gather them together to battle at Gog and Magog.

Rev 20:7 And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

Rev 20:8 And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea.

Rev 20:9 And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

In that final battle against sin and rebellion, Satan and his followers will be utterly destroyed. Moreover, Satan at that time will be cast directly into the Lake of Fire. Though Revelation 20:7-9 does not directly address the matter, here clearly implied is that all who join in that last fateful rebellion against God will also be cast directly into the Lake of Fire. Not only will that be a day of great judgment of the rebellious, but those who lost loved ones will greatly mourn their perdition. The lost may also, but for them it will be too late.

It is at this time that the eternal kingdom will be revealed in new heavens and a new earth.

Rev 21:1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

It is then that Christ will have put all enemies under his feet and delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father (I Corinthians 15:24- 28). *“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”*

Jesus concluded this explanation with the sound admonition, *“Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”* The latter phrase indicates there is more in the parable than at first seems apparent.

The tares and the wheat are allowed to grow together in the same field until the time of the end when Jesus will send forth his angels to gather out His own from the world. The wicked (the tares) will be gathered together and cast into the lake of fire and brimstone.

VIII. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Mat 13:44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

With only His disciples present, Jesus proceeded to teach a fifth kingdom parable. The parable of the hid treasure may be a reference to when one fully understands the gospel of Christ (Jew or gentile) and embraces Christ, he is willing to give His all for Christ.

The gospel of salvation as well as the kingdom itself is a treasure of great value. When one comes to Christ and is truly converted, there is an excitement and willingness to surrender completely to Him. That likely is the thought encompassed in this short parable. For the Jew of that hour, the operative gospel was that of the offered kingdom. Since Calvary, that gospel has been fully revealed by the gospel of salvation through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The treasure in this parable pictures Israel hidden in the world. The field pictures the world as it did in the earlier parables. The man pictures Jesus Christ. He found Israel to be God’s choice. He hid Israel and watched over them in a special way. Then Christ went and sold all that he had, and bought the field with the treasure in it. I tell you Jesus paid a very costly payment for our sins. No gift has ever been given like the one God gave when he gave Christ to die on that old rugged cross.

1 Cor 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

1 Cor 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Rom 5:20 Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

Rom 5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

IX. The Parable of the Pearl

Mat 13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Mat 13:46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

Jesus announced to His disciples a sixth kingdom parable. The essence of this parable is virtually the same as the preceding one. When one fully realizes all that waits ahead for a truly-committed servant of God, he will give his all to Christ. For a Jew of that day (or during the Tribulation) the realization of the prospect of the impending kingdom was (will be) a gem of immeasurable value. For those living in the church age, the comprehension of the gospel of salvation becomes a jewel of great value.

The merchant man in this parable is of course Jesus Christ. The pearl is the church, and the great price that he paid was His own blood. The merchant man desired the goodly pearl and regarded the pearl as being of great price. He sold all that he had and purchased the pearl of great price. He sought the pearl, and then he bought it. No one ever paid a higher price than what Jesus paid for the redemption of our souls. God loves the church, and it will be through the church that Christ will receive honor forever more.

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

Rev 1:6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

Eph 3:20 Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,

Eph 3:21 Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all

ages, world without end. Amen.

Eph 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

Eph 1:21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

Eph 1:22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

Eph 1:23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

X. The Parable of the Net

Mat 13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

Mat 13:48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

Mat 13:49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

Our Lord proceeded to announce a seventh and final kingdom parable to His assembled disciples. Again, Jesus alluded to how in the initial 1,000 years of the kingdom, there will be included all manner of people. Though only the regenerate will enter therein, along the way children will be born which will need to be converted. Some will, some will not.

Though righteousness will be sternly enforced, there evidently will be some 'tares' who survive to the end. God in that day in His own inscrutable way will separate the good from the bad. The greater allusion most likely refers to the Battle of Gog and Magog described in Revelation 20:7-9.

This likely parallels the parable of the tares. Though there is no direct mention made in Revelation 20:7-9 of other than Satan being cast directly into the Lake of Fire, both here and in 13:42, there is a strong indication that all who rebel in that day will be cast directly therein. There thus will be "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Mat 13:50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Mat 13:51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They

say unto him, Yea, Lord.

Mat 13:52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

The mention of 'they' in verse 48 speaks of how God intends for his servants to work in his vineyard. We are to become fishers of men as Christ told Peter and Andrew to come and follow him and he would make him fishers of men.

Mat 4:18 And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

Mat 4:19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

Mat 4:20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

Some of the important points in this parable:

1. There is a net
2. Secondly, there is a the sea in which the net is cast
3. There are the fishermen themselves – they gather in. (verse 48)
4. There are the fish that are caught in the net.

The net symbolizes the gospel. The sea stands for the nations of the world. The fishermen are the ministers of the Word. The work of the fishermen did not end when they brought the net to the shore.

After having presented these seven kingdom parables, Jesus asked His disciples, *"Have ye understood all these things?"*

They answered Him, *"Yea, Lord."* With all due respect, they likely did not. This is evidenced by their questions and actions later in their ministry. We today have the benefit of the completed New Testament as well as a comprehensive theological structure wherein to understand such complex eschatological truth. The disciples as yet did not have that benefit. There no doubt was wishful thinking on their part in this regard. They did have the benefit of the Lord as a teacher.

The scribes that Jesus referred to were not the Jewish scribes which only rehashed the minutia of the Law. A scribe was also a general synonym for a teacher and that likely is the sense in which Jesus uses the word here. Jesus referred here to scribes which were "instructed unto the kingdom of heaven." He spoke of those (such as the disciples) who hopefully understood the truth regarding the kingdom of God.

Such were likened unto a homeowner bringing from his storeroom both old and new things. The application likely is how the concept of the kingdom was an old matter of which Jews for centuries had been looking.

Jesus brought forth from that same storeroom (the Scriptures) new truth concerning the kingdom that even the disciples had not realized. Those various truths were embedded in the seven preceding kingdom parables which Jesus had just taught. The basic truth was old, but He had revealed entirely new dimensions of understanding concerning it. Indeed, both new and old truth had been mixed together.

XI. Jesus Returns to Nazareth

Mat 13:53 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

Mat 13:54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

Mat 13:55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

Mat 13:56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

Mat 13:57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

Mat 13:58 And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

After having taught these weighty parables, Jesus departed from what evidently was Capernaum. The reference to his “own country” likely refers to Nazareth which was some distance to the west and south over the rugged hills of the region of Galilee.

Nazareth was where Mary and Joseph had returned and had raised their family including Jesus. It was His small hometown. In the meantime, Jesus’ reputation had undoubtedly preceded Him and the local population thereof was well aware of His fame and miracles. Upon arrival there, He entered the local synagogue and taught them. His former neighbors were astounded at what they heard.

In His own home area, His former neighbors were reluctant to believe in Him. Allusion is made that Joseph, His stepfather, was a carpenter. This is the only mention thereof in the New Testament. The Catholic Church notwithstanding, Jesus did have brothers and sisters. Mary was not a perpetual virgin. She did

have other children. Jesus' brothers are herein named: James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. He likewise had at least two sisters in as much as they are referred to in the plural.

Neighbors were likely put out at what they presumed was His folly. He claimed to be the Messiah. They thought they knew better. He had grown up there. His brothers and sisters were embarrassed that their brother seemingly was making a fool of Himself. Jesus responded with a proverb that is a truism to this day. *"A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house."*

The place where a preacher grew up often does not give serious credence to him. They knew Him as a kid. In retrospect, this is a sad commentary. Even Jesus' family and friends rejected Him. Indeed, He came unto His own and His own received Him not. To his credit, James, His brother, later became a believer and mightily preached Christ.

Notice the correlation between God's power and faith. The unbelief mentioned here is more than just a lack of understanding. It reflects hardness of heart. Where there is a lack of faith, God does not work in any degree. That lesson remains to this day.

These Jews question who Christ was. Why did he have such wisdom? Why could he perform these mighty works of God. They inquire whether he was Joseph and Mary's son. Mary was his mother truly, but Joseph certainly was not his father. But they were offended by Christ, and because of this, many mighty works were not done due to their unbelief. God wants us to be people of faith. When we bring our petitions to Him, we should expect Him to answer those prayers.

Adam Clarke in his commentary said this about verse 58.

Unbelief and contempt drive Christ out of the heart, as they did out of his own country. Faith seems to put the almighty power of God into the hands of men; whereas unbelief appears to tie up even the hands of the Almighty. A man, generally speaking, can do but little good among his relatives, because it is difficult for them to look with the eyes of faith upon one whom they have been accustomed to behold with the eyes of the flesh.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and

more unto the perfect day.

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