

## Matthew 13 – Parables of the Kingdom

This is a section of scripture that I have wanted to tackle for a long time. I was listening to Chuck Missler's podcast this morning as he was closing out the teaching on the 7 churches in Revelation, and it was like some light bulbs started going off in my head. So thank you, sir. I have heard many different views presented, so now we'll see if I can make some sense as I try to wade through it again on my own.

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

**Matt. 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.**

**Matt. 13:3** **And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying...**

I think it is important to note that the teaching in this chapter occurs later in the day after the Pharisees had accused Jesus of casting out devils in the power of "Beelzebub the prince of devils." (12:24) After dealing with the hatred of the religious leaders, Jesus leaves the house and heads to the seashore. A great multitude followed Him, so He gets into a ship a little off shore and begins to teach them using parables.

I know I've been taught that by positioning Himself in that way, He was able to get better acoustics as well as some space between Him and the crowds.

A parable is basically a story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson.

**Matt. 13:3b-4** **Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:**

**Matt. 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:**

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

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

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

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

I'm not even going to comment on this parable until we get to the verses in which Jesus explains it to His disciples.

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

**Matt. 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.**

It seems that after this first parable, the disciples decided to ask Him what was up. They wanted to know why He had decided to teach using parables. Jesus basically answers that teaching regarding the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" is directed to those that follow Him, His disciples, not to those who are out to ridicule and slander Him. This is more clearly stated in the account in Mark.

Mark 4:11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but **unto them that are without**, all *these* things are done in parables:

“without” – in context would reference those not part of the kingdom

When you encounter reference to a “mystery” teaching in scripture, it is a reference to spiritual truth that had not yet been revealed. The “kingdom of heaven” is a reference to the kingdom that is comprised of those who accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. From the time of Jesus until now that kingdom is still a “heavenly” kingdom, although there are many on earth who are already ~~citizens~~ ~~of~~ servants in that kingdom. (10/08 Note: I was reading through the section in Luke 19 that identifies *servants* as those belonging in the kingdom and *citizens* as those who are enemies of the kingdom, so I want to change my wording to similar reference.) I think it is important to note that those on earth who are identified with that kingdom are those who identify with the body of believers known as the church. There is a day coming yet future when that heavenly kingdom will be established on earth for eternity.

Dan. 7:13-14 I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed.

2Pet. 1:11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Matt. 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.**

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

**Matt. 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:**

**Matt. 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.**

In context, the subject is the use of parables to teach spiritual truth. “Whosoever hath” would be a reference to children or ~~citizens~~ servants of the kingdom of heaven who have spiritual understanding. I understand the Lord to be saying that the more spiritual understanding you gain, the more you will be given. You may just possess a little to start with, but He is declaring that what you have will be multiplied as you apply yourself to “see” and “hear” more.

“Whosoever hath not” would be referencing those who have no spiritual understanding because they have rejected the Lord. They may actually at one

point possess some spiritual understanding, but what little they had would be taken away due to their rejection of the One who can give them further understanding.

Verse 15 makes it clear that spiritual hearing and spiritual sight is directly impacted by the condition of one's heart. The reference to "this people" in this verse is directed toward those who have rejected the Lord and positioned themselves as His enemies; they are not children or ~~citizens~~ servants of His kingdom. The Greek for the phrase "waxed gross" is describing a heart that is thick and callous or hardened. Ears that aren't open to hearing the teaching of truth and eyes that are purposely closed are descriptive of those with stubborn hard hearts.

Jesus goes on to say that these are some of the people that Isaiah prophesied about.

Is. 6:9-10 And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 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.

The reading of Isaiah in the King James is a little misleading, but in reading several other translations, it is clear that it is because of the hardened, stubborn hearts of the people that they cannot hear, see, understand, convert and be healed or made whole. In Mark this healing is defined as having their sins forgiven. (Mark 4:12) Point is made that it is Jesus that can make them spiritually whole. These people, however, have rejected Jesus as Lord; it doesn't matter how many times they are privileged to hear Him teach and see the miracles He performs, they have determined not to believe Him.

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

In contrast to those who have rejected Jesus and refuse to "hear" Him, His disciples have hearts that are eager to learn and who have positioned themselves as children and ~~citizens~~ servants of the kingdom because they have chosen to accept Him as Lord. The fact that they can "see" and "hear" with spiritual eyes and ears testify that they have tender, receptive hearts.

Jesus declares to His disciples that they are being privileged to see and hear things that the prophets and righteous men of old desired to see and hear. They prophesied and looked forward to the coming of the Messiah, and the disciples were privileged to know the Messiah and fellowship with Him and learn from Him. The prophets and righteous men of old knew that Messiah would establish His Kingdom, but they did not know the mysteries of the kingdom that He was teaching His disciples.

**Matt. 13:3b-4 Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:**

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

**Matt. 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.** Now the Lord begins to teach His disciples concerning the parable of the sower. This teaching is very important in gaining understanding to the parables that will follow. These teachings are all directed toward shedding light on the same subject, the kingdom of heaven, and keys that are established in one will be applied consistently throughout. Note that I am including the verses from the teaching followed by the verses giving the explanation.

In this parable Jesus uses the easily understood illustration of a sower planting seed. As this sower goes out to sow, some of the seeds fall on the side of the road and are devoured by the birds.

Jesus explains that this sower is planting seeds of truth that are identified as “the word of the kingdom”; Luke’s account specifically states that it is “the word of God” (8:11). Though He doesn’t spell it out, it is obvious that Jesus is the sower that is planting the seeds of truth in the hearts of His followers; this is confirmed in His explanation of the next parable.

The growth of the seed is directly affected by the type of soil in which it is planted. There are some that hear God’s word and just don’t understand it. The “wicked one,” depicted by the birds, is ready to come and take that seed of truth out of his heart. I think it is easy to identify the “wicked one” as Satan, sworn enemy of God the Father and His Son. His goal has ever been to thwart God’s plan and establish Himself as “God.” Again, this conclusion is actually confirmed in the explanation of the next parable. Mark’s account also confirms that the birds represent Satan (Mark 4:15) and Luke equates the birds to the devil (Luke 8:12).

In reading back over this, I noticed that the “birds” plural are identified as “the wicked” whom Jesus identifies as Satan. This tells me that false teachers and prophets, the followers of Satan, are directly identified with their chosen “lord.”

Jesus is declaring that this seed just never had a chance to take root.

**Matt. 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:**

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

**Matt. 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;**

**Matt. 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.**

In the next example, some of the seed fell in soil that was mostly rocky, so it couldn't really take root. It showed initial evidence of growth, but it quickly withered away and died in the heat of the sun.

Jesus compared this to a person that hears the words of spiritual truth and joyfully receives it. He actually tries to live up to his profession, but when he is confronted with trouble or persecution for what he professes to believe, he quickly decides to abandon the truth because it had not really taken root in his heart. Luke tells us that these people believe for a while; but when faced with temptation, they fall away (8:13). The Greek for *temptation* is "putting to proof." In other words, they make a profession of faith, but that profession is not proven genuine in the light of adversity.

Point is made that the roots couldn't grow to support the plant because there was not enough earth; in other words, the heart of the person did not provide a favorable environment for growth. Luke's account gets a bit more specific. He stated that this seed died from lack of moisture (8:6). This seems to infer that the plant could have survived the scorching sun and its small amount of soil with the proper nourishment. In application, this would seem to be inferring that sufficient nourishment from the water of the word would have grown the seed of truth that had been planted.

John 4:13 Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

The seed of truth planted in this person's heart was never given such nourishment, so that truth died; it was abandoned when confronted with tribulation and persecution.

Scorching sun = tribulation and persecution

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

**Matt. 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.**

In the next example some of the seed falls among thorns and gets choked as the thorns grow around it.

Jesus explains that this person actually understands (from the Greek for *hear*) the truth. The truth, however, proves to be unfruitful in this person's life because he is so focused the things of the world and the "deceitfulness of riches." I thought the Greek was enlightening since that phrase made reference to falling for a delusion. And isn't that what the riches of this world are in comparison to the eternal treasure available through spiritual understanding. This person has made a choice to reject spiritual treasure in his quest for earthly treasure. It was interesting to note that Mark added "the lust of other things" as a part of the thorns (4:19). The Greek for *lusts* makes specific reference to a longing for things

that are forbidden. Luke identifies the thorns as “cares, riches, and pleasures of this life” (8:14). In context, this would be a reference to pleasures that do not align with the pleasures of the kingdom. The writer of Hebrews describes this as “enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season” (11:25). Paul makes warning of this very thing in his letter to Timothy.

1Tim. 6:17-19 Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Thorns = cares of the world, deceitfulness of riches, lusts for what is forbidden, pleasures of this life

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

**Matt. 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.**

In the last example, seed falls into good ground and produces fruit—some of it 100 times, some of it 60 times and some of it 30 times the amount sown.

Jesus declares that this represents the person who receives the seed of kingdom truth with a ready and eager heart. He understands the truth and applies it to his way of life, and it begins to produce more fruit, more spiritual understanding in his life. Luke describes this person as one who “in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep *it*, and bring forth fruit with patience” (8:15).

*Patience* makes specific reference to continuance and consistency. Scripture affirms that continuance in the faith gives evidence to genuine faith.

1John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

James 1:12 Blessed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

The amount of fruit produced varies from person to person, but some find that seed of truth multiplying by 100, some 60 and some 30 times over in their life. I see that as picturing differing rates of spiritual growth according to the spiritual nourishment received. Scripture is clear in identifying the major source of spiritual nourishment as the word of God.

Heb. 5:13 For every one that useth milk *is* unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, *even* those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

1Pet. 2:2 As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

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

In this teaching about the mysteries of the kingdom on earth, the church, I think this phrase is very interesting. I love to study prophecy. When Jesus dictates His letters to the seven churches, this phrase is included in the closing to each one. Every person has ears. I think the Lord is saying that your ability to hear and understand is your choice. If your heart is hard and stubborn, you won't listen to the teacher. If your heart is tender and ready to receive the word of the Lord, you can expect to gain understanding.

Keys to understanding:

- Sower = Jesus
- Seed = words of the kingdom, spiritual truth, and in Luke "the word of God"
- Birds = wicked one who prevents truth from taking root. He is identified in the parable of the wheat and tares as the devil. Mark 4:15 = Satan and Luke 8:12 = the devil

**Matt. 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:**

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

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

**Matt. 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?**

**Matt. 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?**

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

**Matt. 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.**

Again, we have a man sowing seed, but in his own field. This time all the seed is good and is expected to produce fruit. While men were sleeping, his enemy came and planted tares among the wheat. Tares look like the real thing until time to bear fruit, at which time it becomes obvious that it is a weed. The servants go and inform the master that there are tares in his field. He declares that an enemy planted the tares. The servants want to know if they should pull the tares. The master tells them no, they might uproot some wheat in the process. When it is time for harvest, he will have the reapers gather the tares first and bind them in bundles to burn them. Then he will let them gather the wheat to store in the barn.

This time I am moving the explanation up to follow the parable.

**Matt. 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.

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

**Matt. 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*;

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

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

**Matt. 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;

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

**Matt. 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.

Again, the disciples ask for an explanation of the parable after the multitude has gone, and Jesus complies. He identifies the following keys to understanding

- Jesus, the Son of man = the sower
- His field = the world
- Good seed = children of the kingdom, those who produce fruit
- Tares = children of the wicked one
- The enemy = the devil
- The harvest = the end of the world
- The reapers = the angels

Every translation I checked makes a distinction between “man” (singular) in verse 24 and “men” (plural) in verse 25. I think this is significant in that we know that the Lord never sleeps.

**Psa. 121:2-3** My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: **he that keepeth thee will not slumber.**

The Lord is completely aware of what is happening. He is not caught off guard. He already has a plan in place for dealing with the tares. He doesn't have to wonder how the tares got there. He is able to declare that they were planted by an enemy.

It is also important to note that the field, the world, belongs to the Lord even though Satan is allowed to operate as the “prince/god of this world” for the time being.

**John 14:30** Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for **the prince of this world** cometh, and hath nothing in me.

**John 16:7-11** Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and

ye see me no more; Of judgment, because **the prince of this world** is judged.

2Cor. 4:3-4 But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom **the god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

The Lord is painting a picture of His kingdom on earth until Satan has been defeated and Jesus comes to establish His eternal kingdom on planet earth. Until then, His kingdom is defined as encompassing those who accept Him as Lord, but is infiltrated with impostors; a statement so obviously true of the church throughout its history. Tares look just like wheat until they mature and the heads appear. These impostors are placed there by the devil, who is ever at work trying to thwart God's plan. Until the time comes for Jesus to establish His eternal kingdom on earth, He will allow these impostors to dwell among His children. When it comes time for the harvest, the end of the world, time for His children to enter His eternal kingdom, He is going to send the angels to gather up all the children of the devil, the impostors, and throw them into the fire. The children of the devil are those who are a stumblingblock to others and those who practice sin. Point is made that there will be great weeping and grating of the teeth—evidence of great pain. In contrast, the children of the kingdom, the righteous, will shine in the glory of the kingdom of their Father.

Again, point is made that those who choose to listen with a receptive heart will be able to understand.

**Matt. 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:**

**Matt. 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.**

Again, we have a man/sower who is planting in his own field. The focus of this teaching is on a particular seed—the mustard seed, which is identified as the smallest of all seeds. Though the seed is small, the plant it produces is the largest of all herbs; it normally grows to heights of up to three feet. The plant in this parable grows to the size of a tree that provides lodging for the birds of the air in its branches.

The seed is consistently a reference to the words of truth and the fruit it produces. The comparison seems to be focused on how a small grain of truth can produce significant spiritual fruit. The growth pictured here seems to be abnormal to the point that those evil “birds” find *lodging*, or residence and communion (from the Greek). This would indicate that the natural growth of the plant was affected by something that caused it to exceed what was natural. Because of this excess growth, the “birds” could make homes in its branches.

I couldn't help but think of the words of Paul.

Eph. 6:11-12 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.  
The child of God is ever at war against supernatural forces. I believe the abnormal growth of this plant was due to the "wiles of the devil," or evil supernatural sources. The fact that the "birds," or wicked ones find homes in this plant give evidence to this. It seems to me that the devil has been very effective in corrupting God's word so as to make the kingdom appear to be larger than it really is by embracing false teachers/prophets and their followers.

The tares or impostors in the field/kingdom in the previous parable were introduced through subterfuge. In this parable the birds, or wicked ones, openly take up residence in the plant that grew up from the seed. I can't help but think of the brazen false prophets that plaster themselves over the airwaves and author religious books today claiming to be Christians, yet they question the inerrancy of the word of God and manipulate what it says according to their own purposes. In the process they gain huge followings that make "the church" appear to be much larger than it really is.

**Matt. 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.**

When I looked up "three measures," I found this reference in Genesis.

Gen. 18:6 And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth.

This would seem to indicate a routine amount of bread to make when serving guests since that was what prompted Abraham's request. Chuck Missler surmises from this that the Jewish audience would make immediate identification with the fellowship offering that was not supposed to contain leaven.

Leaven is always a type of sin in the scripture. Jesus warned His disciples to beware the *leaven* of the Pharisees, the Sadducees and of Herod.

Matt. 16:6 Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

Mark 8:14 Now *the disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

Mark 8:15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and *of* the leaven of Herod.

The laws governing the temple sacrifices forbade that leaven be used in the burnt offerings.

Ex. 34:25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven....

Paul also picks up on the application in his letter to the Corinthians.

1Cor. 5:6-8 Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is

sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with **the leaven of malice and wickedness**; but with the unleavened *bread* of sincerity and truth.

The purpose of leaven is to “puff up” the dough and is a clear object lesson regarding the effect of pride in one’s life.

In my mind this parable goes hand in hand with the teaching of the wheat and tares. This woman is hiding the fact that she is putting leaven in the meal. She is not doing a good thing. Once the leaven is introduced into the meal, however, it proceeds to permeate the whole loaf of bread. I believe this woman represents the wicked one, the devil, as represented by false teachers/prophets. There are many other places in scripture in which a woman is used to represent evil.

Again, because of my interest in the study of prophecy, the first two that come to my mind are from Zechariah and Revelation.

Zech. 5:7-8 And, behold, there was lifted up a talent of lead: and this *is* a woman that sitteth in the midst of the ephah. And he said, This *is* wickedness. And he cast it into the midst of the ephah; and he cast the weight of lead upon the mouth thereof.

Rev. 17:1 ¶ And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters:

Rev. 17:5 And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

Just as the tares were mixed throughout the whole field of wheat, so this leaven permeates the whole loaf of bread. Just like the tares, it was introduced to the kingdom through subterfuge. Unlike the tares, however, the leaven represents sin itself that invades the kingdom in an attempt to corrupt it. This sin will obviously be practiced by people who claim to be part of the church, but I think the emphasis is on the sin in this parable. In scripture the word/Word of God is compared to the “bread” of life.

Matt. 4:4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

This is a picture to me of the sin of corrupting the truth of the word of God that will continue until the Lord comes to establish His eternal kingdom. The parable indicates that when the bread is done and it is time for the kingdom to be established, it will be more corrupt than good. I couldn’t help but think of the following verse.

Luke 18:8 .... Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

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

**Matt. 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.**

These verses emphasize that Jesus only taught in parables from this time on. Again, it is pointed out how the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets were being fulfilled. The closest verse I could find was from Psalms.

Psa. 78:2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old:

The Hebrew for “dark sayings” made reference to puzzles or riddles. Jesus is emphasizing that these mysteries are revelation of truth that has always existed but are just now being revealed. Until now they have existed only as riddles or puzzles that could not be understood.

It was at this point that the explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares was given. Why would the Lord wait to give this explanation until after also teaching the parable of the mustard seed and the woman hiding the leaven in the meal? I think it is because they were all directed toward teaching about the resulting impact on the kingdom of the corruption of God’s word through the efforts of Satan and his false teachers and prophets. It is explaining how the unnatural growth of the mustard seed occurred and how sin came to infiltrate the kingdom. In essence it explains all three.

**Matt. 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.**

In this parable the Lord compares His kingdom to a treasure hid in a field. A man finds the treasure and is so thrilled with his find that he sells everything he has to purchase the field. The man safeguards His treasure by again hiding it until He can transact the purchase of that field.

We learned previously that the field is the world. The man in the parables has consistently made reference to the Lord Jesus. In context with previous parables, it would seem that the children of the kingdom would correspond to the treasure in the field. Interesting to note is that the whole field was purchased in order to take possession of the treasure. It seems obvious to me that this is a picture of the Lord purchasing the redemption of His children through His death on behalf of all sinners, the whole world. Jesus gave everything He had, His life, to purchase my salvation—and He did for the joy it would give Him—because He wanted to.

Heb. 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; **who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross**, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, **which he hath purchased with his own blood.**

Rom. 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one *the free gift came* upon **all** men unto justification of life.

John 3:16 For God so loved **the world**, that he gave his only begotten Son, that **whosoever** believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

I almost forgot to reference the fact that the man hid his treasure again after finding it until He could complete the purchase of the field. Jesus effectively paid in full for His treasure when He died on the cross. It will be a couple of days (heavenly time), however, before he completes the transaction and comes back to take possession of the field by taking the throne in His kingdom on planet earth. At that time, it will be clear who are the children of the kingdom that are part of this treasure.

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

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

The kingdom of heaven is compared to a merchant man seeking valuable pearls. During his search he finds a special pearl of great price, he sells everything he has to buy it.

In this parable emphasis is made that the man, Jesus, here pictured as a merchant, is seeking to invest in valuable pearls. In this parable the focus is narrowed toward “valuable pearls” and “one pearl of great price.” This seems to indicate that there is a special jewel among the treasures in the world. Again, the price paid for this pearl is “all that he had.” When Jesus gave His life on the cross, it was to redeem all who looked to God in faith for their salvation from all times—the valuable pearls. As I understand scripture, there are two specific groups that could qualify as this “pearl of great price”—Israel or the church.

A pearl is a result of the oyster’s response to an *irritation* to the soft tissue inside the shell. Both the believing remnant of Israel and the church would qualify in this regard, so I find no special clue there. Maybe the fact that this instruction is to Jewish disciples who are distinct from most of Israel, and in fact could be called an irritation to the spiritual leaders of Israel, points toward Israel as this special pearl. Then again, these disciples represent the true “church” that will prove to be irritants to the world at large as they maintain a commitment to Jesus as The way, The truth and The life. In both cases the Holy Spirit transforms the irritant into a special jewel. (2/10) I couldn’t help but think of the following verse this time through.

*1 Corinthians 6:20 “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

Chuck Missler points out that that the oyster is not kosher; it is unclean. He also points out that the pearl has to grow and be removed from its environment (i.e.,

the rapture) to be used as an adornment. These observations would also seem to point to the church as the one pearl.

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

**Matt. 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.**

**Matt. 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,**

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

In this final parable the kingdom of heaven is compared to a fishing net. When fishermen throw their net, they can expect the catch to contain different types of fish. Once they get to the shore, they proceed to separate the good from the bad; they keep the good and throw away the bad.

The Lord explains that this is a picture of how it will be at the end of the world when He comes to establish His kingdom on earth. In the parable of the wheat and tares this is identified as the harvest. Just as the angels in that parable first gathered the tares to throw into the furnace, in this parable they first sever or separate the wicked, the children of the devil (the bad fish) from among the just, the children of the kingdom (the good fish). Again, point is made that the net includes both good and bad just as the field had both wheat (children of the kingdom) and tares (impostors planted by the devil) growing in it. Again, the angels throw the wicked into the furnace and you hear wailing and gnashing of teeth.

**Matt. 13:51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.**

I can't help but wonder if they were really telling the truth. I sure wish they had asked for the Lord to explain each parable.

**Matt. 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.***

In scripture the scribes were those who carefully recorded the copies of the scripture. As a result, the scribes were very familiar with the content of God's word. According to Easton's Bible Dictionary, by Jesus' day they were the public teachers of the people. Jesus is basically declaring that one who is very familiar with the content of God's word and readily receives instruction about the kingdom of heaven is comparable to the master of the house or the head of the family who is able to share both new spiritual truth, the mysteries of the kingdom, along with spiritual truth as recorded by the prophets of old.

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

**Matt. 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?**

**Matt. 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?**

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

**Matt. 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.**

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

Once Jesus had finished teaching the parables, He left for His own country, Nazareth of Galilee. The people readily recognized His gift of teaching and His amazing ability to perform miracles. Still they refused to credit the possibility that One they knew so well as a "local boy" whose family was well known could truly be empowered by God. They were "offended" in Him; they allowed their familiarity with Him and His family to stumble them in believing what He said. It's sad, but true that those who with whom it is hardest to share spiritual truth are usually those you love the most—those who are family and friends and who have a hard time thinking someone they know so well could possess such wisdom or ability. They only hurt themselves because He did only a few miracles there because of their unbelief.