

The Discourse on Kingdom Parables

📖 Matthew 13:1-3, 10-17

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Tonight we come to the discourse of Matt 13. There have been shelves of books written about these chapters. I pointed out last week that the chief problem in interpretation has always been not interpreting in context. In hermeneutics we are trained to move from the broader contexts to the narrower contexts. In the broader context we have the kingdom program defined by the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants. The Abrahamic covenant defined the kingdom in terms of a land, a ruling seed and global blessing. The Davidic covenant defined the King as a descendant of David who would rule on David's throne over this kingdom forever. The King and the kingdom are therefore earthly, political, social and also spiritual as manifested in the reigns of David, Solomon, Rehoboam and other kings who reigned in Judah until the exile to Babylon. This kingdom lay in ruins but all the prophets predicted its future restoration. In the narrower context of the Gospel of Matthew we see that he is writing about the fulfillment of the prophet's prediction in the coming of the Davidic King and the pronouncement that this kingdom was "at hand," a particular phrase that meant the kingdom had come near. The kingdom, however, would only come to earth if the nation Israel met the condition of national repentance. The unfolding of this theme occurs in three phases. First, John the Baptizer is the forerunner of the King and he is offering this kingdom to the nation with the message, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand." The command to "repent" meant to have a change of mind about the religious system of the Pharisees. They needed to repent of that corrupt system in order to be spiritually prepared to meet their King. Second, Jesus is offering this kingdom to the nation with the same message as the forerunner, "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand." It was necessary for the nation to be spiritually prepared to meet their King if they were to recognize Him and receive Him so that the kingdom could come. Third, the nation did not repent so that they were spiritually prepared to meet the King. Hence they rejected John, saying, "He has a demon!" and Jesus, saying, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul!" Jesus then showed that their rejection led to a greater spiritual blindness than when John had first come pronouncing the kingdom's nearness and He rejected the nation.

The exegetical question in Matt 13 is whether Jesus is now introducing a new spiritualized form of the kingdom that is distinct from the kingdom envisioned in the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants and by the prophets and by both John and Jesus in the early chapters of Matthew? In other words, does Israel's rejection result in God

revealing either that the true nature of the kingdom predicted in the OT was spiritual only; disconnected from the people of Israel, the land of Israel and David's throne, and hence only a kingdom of believers on earth and/or in heaven, and no expectation of a restoration of Israel to her promised kingdom, in which case the Jewish hope was entirely wrong, or that that kingdom is still to be expected but during the interadvent age a new form of the kingdom will develop that was previously unrevealed, a spiritual kingdom that does not jettison Israel's restoration, or does the kingdom continue to refer to the same expected kingdom and what is introduced now is an interadvent age which is not a kingdom in any sense but rather the calling out of an assembly of believers that have citizenship in the kingdom to come and are in training now for reigning in that future kingdom when Israel repents and her hopes are realized? These questions related to the kingdom and its form(s) are crucial to answer correctly because they reveal how one interprets Scripture and whether one permits the words of Scripture to have their normal sense which is really nothing more than a reflection of whether one believes the Scriptures. Because the kingdom is such a ubiquitous topic in Scripture how one interprets it colors everything else in Scripture. Consider the devastating consequences of identifying the Church with the Kingdom as was done early in church history by what became Roman Catholicism. In Rome the Church was readily defined in Kingdom terms as political and authoritative such that whole nations of people suffered for centuries under the sword of the Church. At the Reformation this concept of the Kingdom was taken over into the Reformed Church under Calvin who employed the same political and authoritative principles to His Church by which he ruled Geneva with the sword, executing any who stood against him. This is hardly what the NT epistles envision regarding the Church defined as a body and a bride that is spiritually gifted to display love to one another in humble service in preparation to meeting Christ, her groom. Needless to say, the consequences of defining the Church in Kingdom terms have been devastating throughout history and there is no hope for that definition. It is much better to see the Church as something entirely different than the Kingdom and indeed, that is exactly why the special term "Church," *ἐκκλησία*, was employed, for it means "a gathering, an assembly," which emphasizes the believing community, whereas "Kingdom" is *βασιλεία* and means "royal rule." The concepts could not be more utterly different.

So as we come to Matt 13 we will find the expression "mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens" and it will be entirely important how we interpret that expression. Note how closely 13:1 is connected with what has come before. **That day Jesus went out of the house...** Matthew is very careful to say it was **that day** and not another day, meaning the very day that generation rejected Him and He rejected them. On **that day Jesus went out of the house...** We don't know why He **went out of the house**. He may have gone out to get some fresh air or He may have gone out to accommodate speaking to the large crowd or He may have been trying to get away for some rest or more symbolically He may have been signifying His rejection of that generation. But for whatever reason He **went out of the house**. And He went **and was sitting by the sea**. The **sea** here is the Sea of Galilee for there are no other seas and it is a lake and not a "sea" proper, but a freshwater lake. He was probably on the N/NW shores of the lake of Galilee near Capernaum or Tabgha where He spent most of His time in ministry.

In 13:2 **And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.** Once more being surrounded by **large crowds** He retreats to **a boat** and pushed off shore so that there was some distance between Himself and the people **on the beach.** The **beach** of this lake is not sand that extends rather flat for a distance as we might imagine from our experience on the Texas coast but a beach of rocks mixed with pebbles and sand that extends gradually upward. Note that He **sat down.** This is the signal of a rabbi indicating that He is ready to teach. So now with some distance between Himself in **a boat** and the **large crowds** standing on the shores extending upward as in an amphitheater He begins to speak.

In 13:3, **And He spoke many things to them in parables...** This teaching **in parables** is the source of great controversy. Some claim this is a subtle shift in teaching style and others a much more radical shift. Lockyer is an example of the former. To diminish the significance he classifies 26 teachings of Jesus in Matt 5-12 as parables. This attempt to broaden the significance of what is happening here is calculated to protect a definition of the kingdom that incorporates believing Jews and Gentiles into the one spiritual people of God, that is, the elect. It requires one to define the kingdom in a way that entirely rejects any Jewish expectation of a restoration of the earthly kingdom as manifested in the OT.¹ Others claim that this is a radical shift in teaching style that is indicative of a postponement of the kingdom that the Jews rightly expected would be restored to earth. Dwight Pentecost is correct when he observes, "Previously Christ had used parables infrequently in His teaching. Christ's use of them on this occasion was so significant that when an opportunity presented itself, "the disciples came to Him and asked, 'Why do you speak to the people in parables?'" (Matt. 13:10)."² So the fact that this is Matthew's first use of the word **parable** and the disciples question about why He spoke to the people in parables prove that this is a dramatic shift in Jesus' teaching style. Observing the fact that it was on the very day that they rejected Him and He rejected them indicates that the new style of teaching is directly related to the withdrawal of the kingdom. And in fact, the kingdom is never again said to be "at hand."

What is a parable and how is it distinct from a fable and an allegory and how we are to interpret them. First, the Greek word for **parable** is *παραβολη*. It is used 50 times in the Greek NT and is usually translated "parable," though once as "proverb and once as "type." It comes from two Greek words; *παρα* meaning "alongside" and *βαλλω* meaning "to throw, to cast." Thus etymologically the word means "to throw alongside" so as to illustrate a truth by comparison.³ As a comparison they often employ "like" or "as." Comparison is made between a known truth, usually from man or nature in order to reveal an unknown truth in the theological realm, as for example in v 31, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field..." is spoken to make some comparison between this known activity and the kingdom of heaven. A parable differs from a fable in that a fable is a fictitious story with extraordinary elements whereas a parable is true to life though not necessarily a true story. A parable differs from an allegory in that an allegory intends to make many points of comparison whereas a parable intends to illustrate one major point of comparison though there may be other incidental comparisons. So then a parable is a story well-known from life and true to life that is cast alongside a truth in order to illustrate one major point of comparison between the two.

Understanding this definition of a parable is essential to correctly interpreting a parable. For example, if one does not understand that a parable is intended to illustrate one major point of comparison then he will be prone to press all the elements of the parable and go beyond the author's intent. Pentecost is correct in noting that the historical context must be kept close in mind when interpreting them. He says, "Only that interpretation which answers the question or problem can be accepted. This principle gives an objective test concerning one's interpretation of any parable. This principle will also determine at how many points in a parable an analogy is to be drawn. It is legitimate to interpret parts of a parable as long as they contribute to the answer of the question or problem being discussed."⁴ What is the historical context in Matt 13? The King and His kingdom program have been rejected. Therefore the main intent of these parables is to teach about the King and His kingdom program. As Toussaint notes, "Never can the context conflict with the interpretation of a parable. To look at a parable apart from the setting in which it is presented is to set one's boat adrift in the shifting tides of speculation. The parables of Matthew 13 must be considered in the context of the rejection of the Messiah."⁵

In verse 3 we read that **He spoke many things to them in parables...**Note that the expression **spoke many things** and the word **parables** are both in the plural and yet He has not spoken any parable yet. This is therefore an introductory statement to all the parables in this chapter. Let's make six observations to introduce these parables. First, there are eight parables in all. Some have tried to argue that there are seven parables in this chapter in order to make use of the divine number of perfection but actually there are eight parables. These are the parable of the sower, the parable of the tares, the parable of the mustard seed, the parable of the leaven, the parable of the hidden treasure, the parable of the costly pearl, the parable of the dragnet and the parable of the householder. These are the eight parables. Second, the first four parables are spoken in public and the last four are spoken in private. As for the first four, in 13:10 "...the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do you speak to *them* in parables?" The word *them* indicates that He was speaking in public to the crowds. Then after four public parables we read in 13:36 that Jesus "*left the crowds* and went into the house." The words *left the crowds* indicates that from this point forward He was speaking in private to the disciples. So the first four parables were spoken in public to the crowds, which was a mixed group, and the last four parables were spoken in private to the disciples only. Third, only two parables are interpreted; first, the parable of the sower is explained in 13:18ff, and second, the parable of the tares is explained 13:36ff. These parables will be very important for us because they will give us the parameters for interpreting the other parables. However, in verse 51 Jesus' disciples claim they understood all the parables. This is very important and actually helps us understand the parable of the sower which is probably the most misunderstood of all the parables even though Jesus explains it. Fourth, the parable of the sower appears from its placement in Matthew to have been explained in public to the crowds. However, the parallel in Mark 4 makes clear that it was not explained to them but only in private to His disciples. Mark 4:10 says, "As soon as he was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables." The fact is He spoke four parables in public before verse 36 when He went into the house and His disciples finally asked him questions. So of the two parables that were explained the crowds heard neither explanation. They

heard the parables only. Fifth, all eight parables were given on this day. Matthew commonly clusters material that happens on different days but here this cluster occurred all on the same day, the very day of His rejection. This is confirmed in 13:53 which says, "When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there." Finally, the first parable is an introduction to the kingdom parables. It is not a kingdom parable. It is the only one that does not say something like "The kingdom of heaven is like..." This sets it apart. It is not a kingdom parable. It is an introduction to the kingdom parables. This is vital to grasp. As Toussaint says, "...this parable serves as an introduction to the remainder of the parables and does not really give any new revelation of the kingdom of heaven." He is exactly correct and this is proven by three facts. First, this, and the last parable, are the only two that do not begin with the expression "the kingdom of heaven is like..." This means it is not comparing anything to the kingdom but is introductory to comparisons with the kingdom. Second, there is nothing new about the kingdom in this parable. What is here relates mainly to what has already occurred. It is preparatory for the kingdom parables. Third, Mark 4:13 clearly says this parable is introductory to the others. Jesus asked them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?" This shows that understanding the parable of the sower is the key to understanding the other parables. Before we look at this first parable let's look at the disciples response to Jesus' radical shift to teaching in parables in verse 10.

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" This was clearly something new, not that He had never used parables before but that He made such extensive use of them. It may sound strange for them to ask this after just one parable but Mark explains that they did not come to Him with this question until they finally got Him alone after the first four parables. So He had spoken four parables with no explanation and this was interpreted by Jesus' closest disciples as something new. I think we should take it from them that this is a significant departure.

In 13:11 **Jesus answered them, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted."** Let's deal with **the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.** What does the expression **mysteries of the kingdom of heaven** refer to? What is the normal sense of these words? The Greek word **mystery** is *μυστηριον*. I published a journal article in 2003 on this word as it is interpreted by Covenant Theology, Progressive Dispensationalism and Classical Dispensationalism that proved its meaning is rooted in the dream of Daniel 2 and the Aramaic word *raza* which is the Hebrew concept of the word *sod* and means "some objective truth hidden absolutely in God until revealed by God." In other words, a mystery is some verbal revelation that was previously hidden in God and so could not be accessed by humans but is now being made accessible because God is now revealing it. This understanding is confirmed by verse 35 which says, "This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet, "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world." So the truths related to the kingdom of heaven were always known by God and a part of God's plan but they were hidden in Him until this time. Gordon Olson probably translates it the best when he translates it "open-secret truths." These truths were kept secret but now they are laid out in the open, for those who have eyes to see.

Now we come to the kingdom, the kingdom of the heavens. What is the kingdom of the heavens? Well, is it re-defined here? Is there any new concept of the kingdom revealed here? Many dispensationalists consider it to be the same kingdom envisioned by the Abrahamic and Davidic Covenant (e.g. Peters, Alva McClain, Toussaint, Mike Stallard, Andy Woods, Me). Toussaint says, "If John or the Lord Jesus or even the disciples had a different interpretation of the term kingdom, they certainly would have or at least should have explained it. No such clarification is found anywhere in the Gospels or Acts." In another place he says, "The same kingdom is in view in Matthew 13 as the one which was proclaimed as being at hand in Matthew 3:2; 4:17, and 10:7." This kingdom is none other than the one defined by the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants as the royal reign in the land of the house of David but which went into ruin with the Babylonian captivity and in the Gospels was being proclaimed by John and Jesus to be "at hand" but in Matt 12 was rejected by that generation and so was not re-established. Therefore, the natural interpretation is that the **mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens** refer to "new truths related to the establishment of the kingdom," and in particular, that its establishment will be postponed until a generation of Israel receives their Messiah.

This is different than the view held by many dispensationalists which claim this is a mystery form of the kingdom that exists between the two advents and includes the Church but is broader than it. Proponents of a mystery form of the kingdom are multitude; Scofield, McGee, Pentecost, Walvoord, Ryrie, et. al. The chief argument for this view is the expression of Matt 13:11, "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." They interpret this to mean a "mystery form of the kingdom." Pentecost is emphatic when he says, "Christ referred to "the secrets of the kingdom" (Matt 13:11). He was not referring to the covenanted Davidic, or millennial, kingdom..." but "...the hitherto unrevealed form in which God's theocratic rule would be exerted in a previously unrevealed age..."⁶ The chief objection to this argument is that Jesus does not say "mystery form of the kingdom of heaven" but "mysteries concerning or related to the kingdom of heaven." The second argument for this view is Matt 13:41, "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness..." This is interpreted as meaning that when Christ returns He returns to a mystery form of the kingdom out of which He will have to gather those who do not belong in order to establish the Davidic kingdom. The problem with this interpretation is that it assumes what it is trying to prove, namely that there is a mystery form of the kingdom now. But there is no problem interpreting this as saying that when Jesus, to establish His kingdom, will have to remove the wicked at the beginning of His reign. A third argument is the mention of the kingdom in the epistles as something we have been transferred to and that our fruit is said to be related to the kingdom. However, such passages are easily interpreted as positional, relating to our citizenship in the kingdom to come and our fruit as consistent with kingdom righteousness since born by the Spirit. It is neither necessary nor justifiable to argue that the kingdom is here in some new form.

Toussaint, referring to this view says, "This is a dangerous hermeneutic. What is to keep a person from saying the spiritual form of the kingdom was what the Lord was describing from the beginning and in Matthew 13 He clarifies this point? Or what will prevent one from saying Israel rejected Christ so it has no future kingdom and

the only kingdom according to the Gospels is a spiritual one?"⁷ Furthermore, this interpretation is what opened the door for Progressive Dispensationalism to argue that Jesus is on David's throne in heaven ruling now. If a present form of the kingdom is here now then why can't Jesus be on David's throne in heaven now? But then what is to stop one from going on and saying that David's throne in heaven now is all the throne Jesus will ever sit on?" Such a hermeneutic is dangerous indeed in that it tramples on the plain language of the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants by taking passages which belong to them and distorting them into something already here. In my humble opinion it is the road back to Roman Catholicism and its Kingdom-Church paradigm that was inherited by many Protestant denominations and its tendency toward hierarchy, authority and oppression of human beings. The distortion of the kingdom is the single most hurtful heresy developed over the last 2,000 years and causes great confusion over the true nature of the Church.

It is much simpler to say as Toussaint does, "In chapter thirteen the King is giving additional information concerning the kingdom of heaven, information which has never before been revealed. He is instructing His disciples regarding a hitherto unrevealed period of time prior to the establishment of the kingdom. This new age would not be the promised kingdom, nor would it be, strictly speaking, a kingdom in the so-called "mystery form." Thus the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens relate to the span in which the millennial kingdom is being postponed."⁸ The only sense in which the kingdom can be said to exist now is in the sense that when a person believes his citizenship is transferred to the future kingdom and he is known as a "son of the kingdom." As Alva J. McClain rightly says, believers are now forming "...the spiritual nucleus of the future kingdom."

In 13:11 note what Jesus really says about why he was speaking to the people in parables and you will start to understand the parable of the sower. **To you**, His followers, **it has been granted to know** the newly revealed truths **of the kingdom of heaven, but to them**, the crowds, **it has not been granted**. What then is the purpose of the parables? To both reveal and conceal. To reveal new truths about the kingdom to His followers and to conceal the new truths of the kingdom to those who rejected Him. Toussaint agrees saying, "...He uses parables at this juncture for two purposes—to reveal truth and to conceal it. To the ones who accept the Messiah the truth and interpretation of the parables is revealed (Matthew 11:25-26; 13:11-16). On the other hand, to those who have hardened their hearts the truth is veiled by the parables (Matthew 11:25-26; 13:11-15)."⁹ I would only take issue with one point in his explanation and that is that it will be revealed to those who accept the Messiah. It is not just those who accept Him as the Messiah, it is those who were following after Him as they should have been! **To you**, note **you**, the disciples and the twelve as Mark 4:10 has it. Not just believers but those who followed after Him because they understood the gravity of His person and were going after Him despite the opposition of the Pharisees. **To you it has been granted to know. Know** in what sense? **Know** in the sense of gaining further understanding about the kingdom program and particularly its postponement...but **to them**, the crowds, who were curious but not following after Him, **to them it has not been granted** to know. Know in what sense? Know in the sense of gaining further understanding about the kingdom program. They would not get further understanding. This is a stark reminder of the prediction in 11:25 where the Father had already

decided to hide further truths to the wise and intelligent Pharisees and to reveal them to the infants who followed Jesus.

13:12, **For whoever has, to him more shall be given. Whoever has** what? **Whoever has** understanding.

Whoever really grasps the significance of the King and His kingdom program up to this point **shall be given** more understanding. **But whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.**

Whoever does not have what? **Whoever does not have** understanding of the King and His kingdom program, which they should have, they were culpable. What will happen to them? They will not get further understanding of the kingdom program but instead even **what** they do have **shall be taken away**. This is a divine judgment for not following after the King.

To understand the gravity of the situation remember that this generation had seen greater revelation than any prior generation of Israel. Hebrews 1:1-4 says "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ²in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, ⁴having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they." This is probably the highest Christological passage in the entire word of God. What that generation saw, if you can think your way through the Gospels, was the greatest revelation given to any generation in the history of the world. They didn't have a dream, they didn't get a vision, they didn't just see a prophet, this was far more than prophets, visions and dreams, this was God Himself in the flesh, the Creator of the world, the Heir of the universe and there was only one proper response - to follow after Him. When you see the enormity of that you understand why Jesus is speaking parables and saying, that's it, for those of you who aren't following hard after Me, that's it, you are being struck blind because you saw clearer than anyone in the history of the world things that no generation ever saw and you are not following hard after Me and so you are going to be struck deaf.

So the parables simultaneously reveal and conceal and this is so important for the parable of the sower that without it you will never understand. In 13:13, **Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.** That is what I just got through talking about and if you understand it you understand. There was no excuse for not following after Him. Who else was there to follow after? Isn't that what Jesus' disciples said in John 6 when He said, "Eat my flesh and drink my blood?" When Jesus said that loads of even His disciples departed from Him and they were not walking with Him anymore. And what did Jesus say to the twelve? They were grumbling about this, what did He say? "You do not want to go away also, do you?" And how did they respond? Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life....You are the Holy One of God." That was the perfect answer. Only those who saw and understood and followed after Him were going to be the ones who were going to get more understanding.

Everyone else, shut out, it doesn't matter if they believed or not, that is irrelevant. That's why Dr. Pentecost said on Matt 13 don't get drawn into that conversation about which soils believed and which didn't believe. That's not the issue. That parable has been abused in the Free Grace vs Lordship discussion by those who come along and argue that, well, only the last one is a real believer because only it produced fruit and the other side says, no, the second through the fourth are real believers because they all sprouted up. All of that is missing the big point. The big point is not to contrast true believers with unbelievers but to contrast those following after Him vs those not following after Him and how those who followed Him would get further truth revealed to them through the parables while those who did not follow Him would get further truth concealed from them. This is all about further understanding.

In 13:14, **In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; ¹⁵FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY WOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'** There was only one way to miss the greatness of the King and that was to shut one's eyes to Him. In other words, what was the problem? Was the problem the revelation of the King? No, the problem was the eyes of the people. They closed their eyes to the King. They did not want the King. They say it at the end as clear as it can be said when Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" And they said, "We have no king but Caesar." Therefore they are being cut off from further understanding.

13:16, note what Jesus blesses, **But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.** Why are their eyes blessed? Because they did not shut their eyes to the greatness of the King. They did not shut their ears to the perfect lessons which dripped from His honeycombed lips, the words of eternal life, and Jesus blesses them and adds verse 17, **For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.** No generation on the planet ever got to see what they saw and hear what they heard. There were many who yearned to, prophets and righteous men of prior generations, but only one generation saw the Messiah, only one generation heard the Messiah, only one generation had this much revelation and they should have flocked to Him. He was the Great Shepherd, He was the Living and True God, He was the Alpha and the Omega, He was the Beginning and the End, the Seed of David, the Seed of Abraham, the Son of Man, the Son of God. They had no excuse for not seeing or hearing Him.

And note the strong contrast between **them** and **you** throughout this passage. **Them** are the ones who did not follow after Him. Note that I did not say they are those who did not believe in Him. That is questionable. That is not really in view. They may have but they did not follow after Him which was a requirement to get more revelation for that generation. And **you** are clearly those who did follow Him. Did they believe in Him? Of course they did. But that's not really the point. The point is that they followed after Him despite the opposition, despite

the cutting remarks by the Pharisees, despite the persecution that is surely coming for identifying with Him! It is your eyes that are blessed because you see and you hear and because of that you are going to get more truth, further truth about the kingdom, the mysteries of the kingdom are going to be unveiled to you while concealed to them.

In summary, in 13:1, that day signifies the very day that Jesus was rejected. On that very day He also gave this discourse. He went out of the house perhaps signifying His rejection of them and sat by the sea.¹⁰ In 13:2 large crowds came to Him so that He got in a boat in order to create some space between them and He sat down in order to instruct them. The whole crowd was standing on the beach to hear His words. In 13:3, He spoke many things to them in parables. A parable is a story well-known from life and true to life that is cast alongside a theological truth in order to illustrate one major point of comparison between the two. Specifically He spoke four parables in public to the crowds. After the first four parables in 13:10 the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" They obviously noticed a distinct shift in His teaching style. Before He spoke plainly but now He spoke to crowds in parables. Why did Jesus do this? In 13:11, because it was only granted to those who followed after Him to understand new truths regarding the kingdom, and in particular, that in light of the kingdom's rejection the kingdom would be postponed. To those who did not follow Him these truths would be concealed. The parables would both reveal and conceal. In 13:12 Jesus explains that those who had understood the significance of the King and His kingdom program would get more understanding but those who did not understand the significance even what understanding they did have would be taken away. This was a divine judgment. In 13:13 Jesus explains why He speaks in parables, because they saw but they did not see and they heard but they did not hear and they did not grasp the significance of the greatness of Him Who was in their presence. In 13:14, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, a likening is there between those two generations. This only heaps up more judgment because they would keep on hearing truth but they would not understand it, they would keep on seeing truth but would not perceive it. In 13:15 they were spiritually dull and did not perceive the magnificence of Him who was there because they closed their eyes, they didn't want to perceive His magnificence. When all they had to do was turn to Him and He would heal them. But you, in 13:16, those who followed Him, blessed are your eyes, because they see and your ears, because they hear. They saw and heard and understood the significance of the One who graced them with His presence. In 13:17 He explains just how blessed they were above all generations. For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear. What they saw and heard were the words and works of the living God incarnate and only that generation heard and saw them and only those who followed after Him would get more understanding of the beautiful truths of the kingdom in postponement and what this means for the interadvent age and the distinct shift to the Gentiles and the beauty of the Church as Jew and Gentile which is no Kingdom but the body of the Messiah and the bride of Christ and a building made without hands and a temple of the Holy Spirit and that is coming to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Amen.

What can we learn? Understanding of further truth is conditioned on your acceptance of prior truth. There are simply truths that you cannot access if you do not accept every prior truth that has been revealed. This is why it is so important to seek to understand each and every word of God in its original intended sense. For example, this is why so many are in the dark about the Book of Revelation. That book presupposes you know every other book and there are many errors you can make along the way. People who have rejected prior truth are without sound mind and distort and twist that book and many other books into something else because they are in way over their head and they have no business playing with that book. This is serious business because how you think affects how you live and how you live affects others.

Next time the parable of the sower which is the first and most important parable and essential to understanding the others, not a kingdom parable.

¹ Cf Herbert Lockyer, *All the Parables of the Bible*, p 143-171.

² J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 211.

³ Toussaint says, "According to the etymology of the word, "parable" (παραβολη) is the act of placing one thing beside another so that a comparison may be made between them." Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 168.

⁴ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 213.

⁵ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 171.

⁶ J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus Christ*, p 214.

⁷ Stanley Toussaint, *The Kingdom in Matthew 13*, article delivered at the Pre-Trib Rapture Conference, p 8.

⁸ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 171-2.

⁹ Stanley Toussaint, *Behold the King*, p 169.

¹⁰ Some think the sea represents Gentile nations which constituted His next mission during the coming age...cf J. Vernon McGee, *Thru The Bible*, p 71.