

Sunday September 27th 2015
Without a Parable
Part One

1). Mt 13:1 ¶ *On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. 3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow.*

a). The beginning of Matthew Chapter 13 marks a very significant change in our Lord's earthly ministry, both in the content of His message, which now begins to deal with a people other than Israel, and the way that this message is presented, through an extensive use of parables – and it won't escape our notice that this significant change takes place 'on the same day' – leaving us of course with the obvious question, 'On the same day as what?'

b). The answer to the question is the same day as the events we see recorded in Matthew Chapter 12, but in order to answer this question properly and to set Matthew Chapter 12 into its proper context so as to see the importance of the events recorded there, it would be good for us to revisit some foundation first.

2). Ge 22:17 *"blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

a). Abraham and his descendants, through Isaac and Jacob, the nation of Israel, had become the repository to receive both the earthly and the heavenly realms of God's Kingdom with respect to the earth. Something confirmed through the writer of Hebrews in the great Chapter on faith to the saving of the soul - Heb 11:12 *Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born as many as the stars of the sky in multitude--innumerable as the sand which is by the seashore. 13 These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if*

they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.

The fulfillment of God's promise does of course remain yet future.

c). Israel's past history, which continues into their present is marked by unbelief and disobedience which had led in times past, because of Israel's refusal to repent, to the nation being taken into captivity; followed a few years later by the departure of the Glory of God from the Temple in Jerusalem, then ascending into heaven from the Mount of Olives, bringing an end to the Theocracy that had existed since the days of Moses - Eze 10:18 *Then the glory of the LORD departed from the threshold of the temple and stood over the cherubim.*

Eze 11:23 *And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city and stood on the mountain, which is on the east side of the city.*

d). The end of the Theocracy had to do with the earthly realm of the Kingdom, but as we know Israel, being the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, remained the repository of the heavenly realm of the Kingdom as well and it is the heavenly realm that is the sole focus of the Lord's first advent.

3). Mal 4:5 *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD. 6 And he will turn The hearts of the fathers to the children, And the hearts of the children to their fathers, Lest I come and strike the earth with a curse."*

a). We will remember from our study of Malachi that God had promised to send Elijah the prophet to Israel to turn the nation to repentance prior to the establishment of Christ's Millennial Kingdom. Elijah is the one who is to come before the Lord as the forerunner to prepare the nation for Messiah's arrival. And this is what we find concerning Elijah within this context written by the prophet Isaiah - Isa 40:3 ¶ *The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be exalted And every mountain and hill brought low; The crooked places shall be made straight And the rough places smooth; 5 The glory of the LORD shall be revealed, And all flesh shall see it together; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

b). With this in mind let's now look at what we find at the beginning of Matthew Chapter 3 - Mt 3:1 ¶ *In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" 3 For this is he who was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"*

c). That which Isaiah had prophesied concerning Elijah is seen here in connection with John the Baptist. Then if we move on a few chapters this is what the Lord has to say about John - Mt 11:9 *"But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. 10 "For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' 11 "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12 "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. 13 "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. 14 "And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come. 15 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

d). Jesus draws the parallel between John and Elijah pointing out that John 'is Elijah who is to come', but there is a condition that is attached to this, 'if you are willing to receive [it]'.

e). And that which Israel was to be willing to receive was the simple message that John brought to them, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!'.

f). National repentance, to change their mind and turn from unbelief to belief; moving from disobedience to obedience, was all that was required for the nation of Israel with their Messiah to take the Kingdom of heaven from the hands of Satan and his angels. Satan and his angels would be overthrown and the Christ and repentant Israel would move in and take the Kingdom.

g). However, God in His foreknowledge, knew that Israel as a nation would not repent and so John the Baptist was sent as the forerunner of Christ at His first advent and not Elijah; however, just as John was the forerunner of Christ at His first advent so will Elijah be the forerunner of Christ at His second advent when the nation will repent bringing to fulfillment that prophesied by Isaiah and Malachi.

h). And so the call to repentance, to change their collective mind, given by John was exclusively for the nation of Israel as a whole and although

individuals within the nation did respond and repent, Israel as a national entity, under the direction of their religious leaders, did not.

i). Rather than bringing the nation to repentance John found himself in prison instead and his simple message was then taken up by Jesus –

Mt 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." 23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

j). The message remained the same – the offer of the Kingdom of the heavens, conditioned upon the nation's repentance and the message was now accompanied by 'healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people', miraculous signs demonstrating to the nation the spiritual healing that would be theirs upon repentance.

4). Israel, because of their centuries of unbelief and disobedience, was spiritually sick, but healing from that spiritual sickness was available to them. The spiritual condition of the nation and that which would be theirs following repentance had been recorded by the prophet Isaiah - *Isa 1:4 Alas, sinful nation, A people laden with iniquity, A brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the LORD, They have provoked to anger The Holy One of Israel, They have turned away backward. 5 Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, And the whole heart faints. 6 From the sole of the foot even to the head, There is no soundness in it, But wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; They have not been closed or bound up, Or soothed with ointment.*

a). That described here by Isaiah had been the nation's condition for centuries and was certainly the condition that existed at the Lord's first advent. However Isaiah continued with his prophecy to show Israel what could be theirs IF they would repent - *Isa 1:16 ¶ "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, 17 Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. 18 "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. 19 If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;*

b). And, as further encouragement Isaiah then continued by describing the conditions that would exist for the nation following their repentance –

Isa 1:25 *I will turn My hand against you, And thoroughly purge away your dross, And take away all your alloy. 26 I will restore your judges as at the first, And your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." 27 Zion shall be redeemed with justice, And her penitents with righteousness.....2:2 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the LORD'S house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And all nations shall flow to it. 3 Many people shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall go forth the law, And the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. 4 He shall judge between the nations, And rebuke many people; They shall beat their swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war anymore.*

c). Here then, in Isaiah as well as elsewhere, recorded in the nation's own scriptures was the description of the nation's spiritual condition, the promise of what would be theirs upon repentance from their unbelief and the conditions that would exist beyond their repentance within the Kingdom of their Messiah.

d). And then at the Lord's first advent came John the Baptist –
Lu 1:17 *"He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

e). The forerunner who came with the message of repentance in order to occupy the Kingdom of the Heavens, a realm of God's Kingdom that the Jews would know was promised to them as Abraham's descendants – and implicit through John's call to repentance would be the promise of the nation's healing and all that would follow from it, just as we have seen in Isaiah, just as would have been read in their synagogues and in the Temple.

f). And then came the King Himself, not only with the same message but also sign after miraculous sign, demonstrating through physical healing the spiritual healing that would await the nation following repentance in the 7th Day.

g). Despite that which was manifest before their eyes Israel's religious leaders, at every turn, sought to counter the message and discredit the Messenger, constantly rejecting the Kingdom of the Heavens which was being offered to them - Mt 23:13 ¶ *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.

5). In the account of the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt, as they camped at Kadesh Barnea, there came a terminal point caused by their unbelief, they crossed a line from which there was no turning back, having embraced the bad report given by 10 of the 12 spies, considering that God was not able to fulfill that which He had promised - Nu 14:1 ¶ *So all the congregation lifted up their voices and cried, and the people wept that night. 2 And all the children of Israel complained against Moses and Aaron, and the whole congregation said to them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! 3 "Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?" 4 So they said to one another, "Let us select a leader and return to Egypt."*

a). And having reached this terminal point in their rejection of Him, God would not change His mind concerning the consequences for this generation. It was in effect for them a point of no return - Nu 14:28 *"Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: 29 'The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 'Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in.*

b). And just such a terminal point of no return as this, with regards to the heavenly realm of the Kingdom, was reached by Israel's religious leaders after a similar fashion to that seen in Numbers, recorded through particular events in Matthew Chapter 12.

6). What we find in Matthew Chapter 12 are 3 interrelated events all of which take place 'on the Sabbath'. The first of these has to do with the actions of the Lord's disciples - Mt 12:1 ¶ *At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. And His disciples were hungry, and began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. 2 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath!"*

a). We will remember that the Sabbath had been given to Israel as a perpetual covenant, a day to be observed throughout their generations – a

sign pointing to the future Sabbath Rest of God, the 7th Day, the Millennial Kingdom - Ex 20:8 *"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

b). The complaint that the Pharisees make against the Lord's disciples is not out of zealousness for the Law, but to discredit the Lord in the eyes of the people.

c). The Lord then points out to them the actions of David and those who were with him who ate the showbread which was only for the priests without incurring the wrath of God. He then reminds them - Mt 12:5 *"Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?*

Pointing out to them - Mt 12:7 *"But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless.*

d). And then, in the most direct and unequivocal way possible He tells them - Mt 12:6 *"Yet I say to you that in this place there is One greater than the temple.*

Mt 12:8 *"For the Son of Man is Lord [even] of the Sabbath."*

e). In criticizing the disciples the Pharisees challenge the authority of the Lord of the Sabbath attempting to use the letter of the law to undermine the One who fulfills the law.

f). This attack on the Lord of the Sabbath and therefore the Sabbath itself then continues in the verses that follow - Mt 12:9 *Now when He had departed from there, He went into their synagogue. 10 And behold, there was a man who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?" --that they might accuse Him.*

g). The Pharisees motive for asking the question is clear, but if we reflect on their question for a moment and connect it back to the verses we previously read from Isaiah where spiritual healing for Israel is promised in the 7th Day then we might catch a glimpse not only of the absurdity of the question but also the 'in your face' contempt that they had for the Lord.

h). And as previously the Lord points out their hypocrisy - Mt 12:11 *Then He said to them, "What man is there among you who has one sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not lay hold of it and lift it out? 12 "Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath." 13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and it was restored as whole as the other.*

i). Now this is not the first time that the Pharisees had displayed this kind of contempt for the Lord, but there is something that happens

immediately after this that takes them to that point of no return which we had spoken of earlier - Mt 12:14 ¶ *Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.*

j). Unable to withstand the righteousness of His rebuttals they decide that the only way to stop Him is to kill Him. The sign pointing to The Sabbath is rejected and the One performing the sign, the Lord of the Sabbath Himself, is marked for death.

7). Mt 12:15 *But when Jesus knew it, He withdrew from there. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them all. 16 Yet He warned them not to make Him known, 17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: 18 "Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, And He will declare justice to the Gentiles. 19 He will not quarrel nor cry out, Nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench, Till He sends forth justice to victory; 21 And in His name Gentiles will trust."*

a). It is not surprising that on this particular Sabbath the Lord 'healed them all' and not surprising that at this point that He quotes from Isaiah Chapter 42, verses that have to do with His coming Kingdom and with the Gentiles in relation to His Kingdom - Here we can begin to see a shift away from Israel.

c). The 3rd of the 3 interrelated events seen on this Sabbath then follows Mt 12:22 ¶ *Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. 23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?" 24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

d). The man brought to the Lord here, in his affliction, symbolizes the entire nation – blind, unable to see that which is so clearly set before them; mute – unable to speak the word of God to all nations as they were supposed to because of their disobedience and 'demon-possessed' – filled with the wickedness of disobedience and rebellion. The healing of this man then has enormous significance for the nation and faced with what they have just witnessed let's note the multitudes' reaction, *And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"* Their question, although

doubting, allows for the possibility that Jesus is their Messiah, the Greater Son promised to David in 2 Samuel Chapter 7.

e). When the Pharisees hear the multitudes' question, realizing the implication, they immediately deflect and distract, in effect giving a bad report, claiming that Jesus' power to cast out demons comes from Satan rather than recognizing that it comes from the Holy Spirit.

f). This is the sin that the Lord calls 'the blasphemy against the Spirit', a sin that will not be forgiven them in this age or the age to come. And it is this 'blasphemy against the Spirit', the third of the 3 attacks against the Sabbath, the 7th Day, that for all practical purposes marks the taking of the Kingdom of the Heavens from Israel, although the statement itself is not recorded until Matthew Chapter 21.

g). Mt 12:31 *"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. 33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. 34 "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. 36 "But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. 37 "For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."*

h). The extent of the Pharisees wickedness and hypocrisy, and the depth of their contempt for the Lord is then compounded through their question in the verse that follows - Mt 12:38 ¶ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

i). But this will have to wait until next week – if the Lord is willing.