

Sunday November 29th 2015
Without a Parable
Part Ten

1). Mt 13:33 *Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened." 34 All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."*

a). Power point.

b). And so following the conclusion of the parable of the leaven we find a further explanation concerning the Lord's use of parables. And this explanation is given just prior to the Lord going back into the house where He firstly answers the disciples' question about the parable of the wheat and the tares and then gives the 3 remaining parables in this sequence.

c). And as we look at the verses from Matthew 13:34-35 there are some interesting things we need to note – firstly we see that, 'without a parable He did not speak to them', and secondly, that the Lord speaking in parables is the fulfillment of that 'spoken by the prophet' in which He would, 'utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world.'

d). And the place in the OT scriptures where we find that 'spoken by the prophet' is – Ps 78:1 ¶ <<A Contemplation of Asaph.>> *Give ear, O my people, to my law; Incline your ears to the words of my mouth. 2 I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old, 3 Which we have heard and known, And our fathers have told us.*

e). And in the opening verses of this Psalm we see the admonition from the Lord to give ear to His law and to hear the words of His mouth, which is then directly linked to what the Lord would say in parables, where He would speak, uttering the dark sayings of old; He would be speaking things that were 'heard and known', things that the 'fathers have told us'; things then contained in the law, the prophets and the psalms. All of which hopefully might remind us of what we see in - Heb 1:1 ¶ *God, who at various times and in various ways*

spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

f). And we will remember that what follows from these verses in the Book of Hebrews is a series of 7 OT quotations, the very things told by the fathers from psalm 78, all of which deal prophetically with Christ and His coming Kingdom. That which is of course the subject of the entire Book – Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

2). So then, in times past God spoke ‘to the fathers’ by the prophets, the giving of the OT scriptures, which contain ‘the things kept secret from the foundation of the world’ and in these last days He has spoken to us by His Son, who speaks to us here in Matthew Chapter 13 through parables, revealing those secrets hidden in the OT scriptures, the dark sayings of old.

a). Now the phrase, ‘without a parable He did not speak to them’ must be connected back to that which we had seen earlier in Matthew Chapter 13 concerning the Lord’s use of parables - Mt 13:10 *And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 11 He answered and said to them, "Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. 12 "For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him. 13 "Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.' 16 "But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 17 "for assuredly, 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. 18 "Therefore hear the parable of the sower:*

b). We will remember from when we studied these verses that a distinction is made in them between ‘you’, the disciples, to whom - *it has been*

given... to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven – and ‘them’ the remainder of the nation of Israel, the multitude, to whom - it has not been given to know.

c). And we will remember that this is not an arbitrary distinction but one based upon each individual’s ability to hear the spiritual truth presented to them. Let’s not forget that the multitude were eternally saved as a result of exercising faith in God’s provision for sin in the death and shed blood of the Passover lambs, and therefore, because they had spiritual life, they had the ability to receive and understand spiritual truth - *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"*

d). But as we know having ‘ears to hear’ was not something the multitude possessed – Mt 13:13 *"Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 "And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'*

So then, despite hearing the actual words that the Lord speaks and having the ability to receive and understand the spiritual truth contained in those words the multitude doesn’t have spiritual ears to hear the spiritual truth being presented; and the reasons for their inability to hear that which they could have understood are clearly stated - ‘the hearts of this people have grown dull’ and ‘their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed’ – all this of course was not an overnight development but the result of centuries of unbelief resulting in spiritual sickness – Isa 1:6 *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.*

This is a state of affairs brought to its zenith here at the Lord’s first advent by Israel’s religious leaders’ rejection of the King and His Kingdom, bringing a bad report to the people - Mt 12:24 *Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

3). We might find it interesting to note that the phrase 'dark sayings' found in Psalm 78 is a translation of a word having to do with a puzzle something that has to be worked out, which might remind us of the process given to us by the Lord by which the scriptures are to be understood - Isa 28:10 *For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little."*

a). When we find this phrase 'dark sayings' used in Matthew Chapter 13 where Psalm 78 is quoted the phrase is translated, 'secret', a word that has to do with concealing, as with a covering.

b). And the 'things kept secret from the foundation of the world', the 'dark sayings of old' are the same things called 'the mysteries of the kingdom', where the word 'mysteries' has to do with shutting the mouth, with the idea of keeping silent.

c). And so to put all these together we will realize there must be something that will unlock the puzzle, something that will enable that which has been concealed to be revealed and something that will cause the silence to be broken because we know from - Am 3:7 *Surely the Lord GOD does nothing, Unless He reveals His secret to His servants the prophets.*

And - Isa 46:9 *Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'*

d). That which was necessary to unlock the puzzle was obviously possessed by the disciples as it had been given to them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, but something not possessed by Israel as a whole as it was not given to them to understand.

e). And by comparing scripture with scripture we can know exactly what this is. Let's begin with - 2Co 3:14 *But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. 15 But even to this day, when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. 16 Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*

Here in 2 Corinthians we can see that the veil, the covering that conceals the 'dark sayings' contained in the OT scriptures 'is taken away in Christ' – and we might note that Paul specifically refers to Moses in connection with this veil, Moses who wrote the first 5 books of the Bible, beginning with Genesis.

a). However, the idea of this veil being 'taken away in Christ' can't be linked to an experience at the point of eternal salvation as Israel at Christ's first advent was clearly eternally saved prior to the Lord preaching the gospel of the kingdom which they could not hear or see. There is then something else going on here, something beyond the initial experience of eternal salvation – something that is opened up for us through - Mt 16:15 *He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. 18 "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. 19 "And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then He commanded His disciples that they should tell no one that He was Jesus the Christ. 21 ¶ From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.*

b). As we have seen in previous Bible Studies it is the revelation brought forth from above that Jesus is 'the Christ the Son of the living God' that is the foundational 'rock' upon which God would build His Church. And as we have seen this is not a case of knowing 'who your Daddy is' but hearing the enormous spiritual truth contained in this simple statement.

c). To know that Jesus is the Christ, the anointed One, anointed to be Prophet, Priest and King and knowing the significance of Him being the Son of the living God as seen through 2 Samuel Chapter 7.

d). The nation of Israel through the influence of their religious leaders were not able to receive this revelation, hence it was not given to them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom, but the disciples were able to receive it and so to them it was given, on one level it is as simple as that.

e). There is however a common denominator that links the disciples and the Jews – which is the OT scriptures.

f). We realize then that the revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God doesn't just drop out of the sky, but is a work of the Holy Spirit that has context and the context is the OT scriptures - Mt 13:51 *Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."*

g). This is something we can clearly see from the events on the road to Emmaus following the Lord's resurrection - Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

And a large part of this revelation concerning Jesus being the Christ, the Son of the living God, is in understanding the necessity of His death and resurrection; the very things the Lord draws the disciples attention to following Peter's pronouncement in Matthew Chapter 16 - 1Co 2:7 *But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, 8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9 But as it is written: Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him." 10 But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.*

h). There is then an expectation on the Lord's part that we are to have a proper engagement with the scriptures that will allow those with ears to hear to be open to the teaching of the Holy Spirit - Joh 16:13 *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*

Within our own setting this would involve both listening with spiritual ears to the Word being taught - Ro 10:17 *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

i). And then our own study of the scriptures based upon that which is taught – Ac 2:42 ¶ *And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.*

2Ti 2:15 *Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

All under the guidance and leadership of the Holy Spirit as He is the One who is really our teacher.

j). Then as we think about the Lord's expectation with regards to the scriptures let's remember one thing about the Lord's disciples - Ac 4:13 *Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.*

There are two words that should leap out at us from this verse in Acts, 'uneducated and untrained'. Peter and John were just fishermen, but what made the difference for them is that they 'had been with Jesus'. They had spent significant time being taught by the Word while He was with them and then embraced being guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit once He was sent following the Lord's ascension.

k). They didn't suddenly and supernaturally become intellectual giants rather they allowed the Holy Spirit to open the scriptures to their understanding, they allowed themselves to be transformed by the renewing of their minds. And in this there is enormous encouragement for us because it is in this way and this way alone that the scriptures are opened to us and because this is a work of the Holy Spirit the scriptures are accessible to anyone and everyone who will have ears to hear.

l). However, the mysteries of the kingdom will remain hidden for those whose hearts have grown dull, whose ears are hard of hearing and whose eyes are closed, something said this way in - 2Co 4:3 *But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

And that which Paul writes in these verses cannot be separated from the work of the tares sown amongst the wheat, the leaven placed in the 3 measures of meal until all was leavened – it is the work of the enemy described through these 2 parables that gives rise to the situation Paul is describing here in 2 Corinthians Chapter 4, a situation that directly parallels the circumstances found in Israel at the Lord's first advent.

m). And so, the 'dark sayings of old', the 'things kept secret from the foundation of the world', that which has previously been concealed in the OT scriptures is made known by the Lord through His use of parables, and although our focus is on the parables in Matthew Chapter 13 we will realize that we must look beyond Matthew 13 to the other parables, such as the wise and foolish virgins, the minas etc. as within the scope of that said in our opening verses this morning.

n). We will however need to pick this up again next time – if the Lord is willing.