

Sunday October 4th 2015
Without a Parable
Part Two

1). Mt 12:38 ¶ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."*

a). We may remember from last week that this demand by some of the scribes and Pharisees came in response to the condemnation the Lord had just spoken to them following their reactions to 3 interrelated events; reactions that sought to completely undermine the gospel of the Kingdom which the Lord was preaching, attempting to discredit the One bringing the good news and showing their contempt for the 7th Day, thereby despising their birthright.

b). We will remember that these 3 events all took place on 'the Sabbath' and began with a condemnation of the Lord's disciples as they plucked heads of grain to eat, they continued with an attempt to condemn the Lord for healing the man with the withered hand in the synagogue and were brought to a climactic conclusion by what the Lord called, 'the blasphemy against the Spirit' as He healed a man whose infirmities symbolized the condition of the nation.

c). Taken together these 3 events represent a complete rejection, on the part of Israel's religious leaders, of both the King and His Kingdom; having refused to accept the miraculous signs which demonstrated the power of the Kingdom Age that would be the nation's experience upon repentance and having given a 'bad report' to the people.

d). Israel's religious leaders having reached what we may call a point of no return then ask for another sign, but the Lord makes clear to them that only one sign now remains – Mt 12:39 *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

e). And reference to this same sign is recorded a few Chapters later in response to a similar demand in - Mt 16:1 ¶ *Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came, and testing Him asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. 2 He*

answered and said to them, "When it is evening you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'; 3 "and in the morning, 'It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening.' Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. 4 "A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." And He left them and departed.

f). Now what is particularly significant about this is that the sign of the prophet Jonah of necessity now brings into focus the Lord's death and resurrection on the one hand and, through the duality of the type, the fact that Israel can now only fulfill God's purpose for them at a future time, on the 3rd Day following the 2 days, the 2000 years of the dispensation allotted to them –
Ho 6:1 ¶ *Come, and let us return to the LORD; For He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up. 2 After two days He will revive us; On the third day He will raise us up, That we may live in His sight.*

Joh 2:1 ¶ *On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.*

g). Although the statement concerning the Kingdom of the Heavens being taken from Israel is not recorded until Matthew 21:43, the Lord's poignant reference to the sign of the prophet Jonah could really make it no other way from Chapter 12 onwards and sets in motion a chain of events that puts Israel on a course that must lead them to the Great Tribulation, the time of Jacob's trouble, because of the nation's refusal to repent - Isa 1:20 *But if you refuse and rebel, You shall be devoured by the sword"; For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

2). Mt 12:41 *"The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here. 42 "The queen of the South will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed a greater than Solomon is here.*

a). In these verses we find a further condemnation of Israel's religious leaders as the Lord draws attention to the repentance of 'the men of Nineveh' and the actions of 'the queen of the South' – both of whom we would know to be Gentile.

b). That which the Lord is teaching them here is really very simple – the men of Nineveh, Gentiles, repented at the preaching of Jonah and here in the midst of the Jews, the people to whom had been given the Word of God and the promises, was One exponentially greater than Jonah, whose call for repentance is rejected and vilified. The queen of the South, a Gentile, ‘came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon’, and here in the midst of the Jews, the nation adopted as God’s firstborn son, is the One whose wisdom is exponentially greater than Solomon’s - Col 2:3 *in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

And His wisdom is spurned and scorned.

c). ‘In the judgment’ the actions of those in Nineveh and the queen of the South will condemn ‘this generation’ of Jews because these Gentiles responded positively to that which was just a shadow of the coming of the Lord drawing into sharp contrast the hard hearted wickedness of ‘this generation’ of Jews, God’s chosen people, in the presence of God Himself.

d). And what we find here in these verses from Chapter 12 is seen after a similar fashion close to the end of the previous Chapter, in which the Lord speaks condemnation because of the rejection of the miraculous signs pointing to the 7th Day – Mt 11:20 *Then He began to rebuke the cities in which most of His mighty works had been done, because they did not repent: 21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "But I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. 23 "And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades; for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 "But I say to you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for you."*

3). Once Israel had been delivered from Egypt and while the nation was still in its infancy God had made clear to them that continued unbelief and disobedience on their part would not be tolerated and would have the direst of consequences for them - a few verses from Leviticus Chapter 26 will demonstrate this for us - Le 26:18 *'And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 I will break the pride of your power; I will make your heavens like iron and your earth like bronze. 20 And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield its produce, nor*

shall the trees of the land yield their fruit. 21 'Then, if you walk contrary to Me, and are not willing to obey Me, I will bring on you seven times more plagues, according to your sins. 22 I will also send wild beasts among you, which shall rob you of your children, destroy your livestock, and make you few in number; and your highways shall be desolate. 23 'And if by these things you are not reformed by Me, but walk contrary to Me, 24 then I also will walk contrary to you, and I will punish you yet seven times for your sins.

a). Now, if we carry this warning/promise over into Matthew Chapter 12 we will realize that for centuries God had sent prophets to Israel calling them to repentance and these prophets along with their message were rejected – Lu 13:34 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you were not willing!* And now here is the Son Himself calling the nation to repentance but they 'were not willing'.

b). It is no surprise then to find that the final words spoken to Israel's religious leaders in Matthew Chapter 12, following the 'blasphemy against the Spirit' and just before Christ leaves the house to sit by the sea, reiterate that which we see in Leviticus Chapter 26.

4). Mt 12:43 *"When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. 44 "Then he says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. 45 "Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."*

a). These verses, that we may best describe as a parable, not only reiterate that which we saw in Leviticus Chapter 26, but also set out what at the time the Lord speaks them would be the future history of Israel from the time His words are spoken right through to the Great Tribulation.

b). Within the imagery of this parable the 'unclean spirit' pictures unrepentant Israel – the 'man' also called the unclean spirit's 'house' pictures the land, the city and the Temple.

c). V43 speaks of a time when unrepentant Israel would be absent from the land, the city and the Temple, cast out amongst the Gentiles, but unable to find rest and this speaks of the House of Israel being left desolate which is the same thought that we had seen in our study of Matthew Chapters 24-25 –

Mt 23:37 *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 "See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 "for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"*

d). The literal fulfillment of Matthew 12:43 would take us to 70AD and beyond with the Roman destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, to the time when Israel as a national entity ceased to exist and, dispersed amongst the Gentile nations, the Jews then experienced centuries of pogroms and persecutions at the hands of the nations in which they found themselves – a situation that had already been spoken through Moses to the first generation to come out of Egypt in Leviticus Chapter 26 and repeated for the second generation in Deuteronomy Chapter 28 - De 28:64 *"Then the LORD will scatter you among all peoples, from one end of the earth to the other, and there you shall serve other gods, which neither you nor your fathers have known-wood and stone. 65 "And among those nations you shall find no rest, nor shall the sole of your foot have a resting place; but there the LORD will give you a trembling heart, failing eyes, and anguish of soul. 66 "Your life shall hang in doubt before you; you shall fear day and night, and have no assurance of life. 67 "In the morning you shall say, 'Oh, that it were evening!' And at evening you shall say, 'Oh, that it were morning!' because of the fear which terrifies your heart, and because of the sight which your eyes see.*

e). Then in Matthew 12:44 we see the 'house' empty, swept and put in order – the Jews outside of the land and the city, without a Temple was/is exactly where God wants them as He will only deal with the nation with a view to their repentance out amongst the Gentiles.

f). If however, the nation of Israel would try to bring about a change in their circumstances through their own efforts, pictured through the words of the 'unclean spirit' - *'I will return to my house from which I came.'* – then they would find themselves in a condition 7 times worse than where they had started - *the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation."*

g). Well, historically, Israel began to try to bring about a change in their circumstances in 1948, returning unrepentant to the land from which God had moved them, and having done this there can be only one outcome, that which scripture has already recorded culminating in the horror of the Great

Tribulation, when Israel's experience will be 7 times worse than the day the Roman legions sacked Jerusalem.

h). And in the land today, but out of God's will, Israel is now experiencing another facet of the sign of the prophet Jonah, a sign that at this present time of course they are unable to see - Jon 1:10 *Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. 11 ¶ Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?" -for the sea was growing more tempestuous. 12 And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me."*

5). Mt 12:46 ¶ *While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. 47 Then one said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You." 48 But He answered and said to the one who told Him, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" 49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 "For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."*

a). The final verses in Matthew Chapter 12 give us the perfect segway to that which we are about to find in Chapter 13.

b). That which we see in these verses should not be seen as the Lord rejecting His literal earthly family, but rather a teaching point that reflects back on the interaction He has had with the Jews and forward to the dispensation in which we now find ourselves.

c). The Lord's mother and brothers are His family by birth in the same way that Israel is His family by birth and we might remember that Israel's religious leaders considered their status as the descendants of Abraham by birth the only thing that mattered, an assumption that John the Baptist had challenged before his imprisonment - Mt 3:7 ¶ *But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 "Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance, 9 "and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.*

d). That which the Lord says in these final verses in Chapter 12 is essentially the same – those who are His family by birth, the nation of Israel, is

now set aside and from this time onwards it will be those 'who do the will of My Father in heaven' who are to be seen as 'My brother and sister and mother.'

e). This is how the same incident is recorded in Luke - Lu 8:20 *And it was told Him by some, who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You." 21 But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."*

f). And again in Mark - Mr 3:31 ¶ *Then His brothers and His mother came, and standing outside they sent to Him, calling Him. 32 And a multitude was sitting around Him; and they said to Him, "Look, Your mother and Your brothers are outside seeking You." 33 But He answered them, saying, "Who is My mother, or My brothers?" 34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 "For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."*

g). It is then those who will act 'by faith', who will 'hear the word of God and do it', who will now become family to the Lord of the Sabbath, and all of course within the context of that to which the Sabbath points – the Millennial Kingdom.

6). Mt 13:1 ¶ *On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.*

a). It is then 'on the same day' – the same day that Israel's religious leaders demonstrate their climactic rejection of Christ and His Kingdom, on the same day that Jesus condemns those leaders for 'the blasphemy against the Spirit'; on the same day that through a parable the Lord outlines what must now be Israel's future and the same day that He embraces those who will be of faith, that the Lord 'went out of the house and sat by the sea'.

b). This seemingly matter of fact sentence is fraught with tremendous significance. The 'house', in this context, can only be the House of Israel, and in leaving the House the Lord makes plain that His attention is going to shift to a people other than Israel.

c). And the fact that He then 'sat by the sea' clearly shows that the people other than Israel will be those of whom the 'sea' is a type, the Gentiles - Ac 15:14 *"Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name."*

d). Implicit in this then is that those who are Gentiles will be grafted in to the family of God by faith, that there must be a 'new creation' which would place those Gentiles having faith as sons in God's house, with the future hope

that these sons would be adopted as firstborn sons to receive that which has been taken from Israel – the Kingdom of the Heavens - Isa 42:1 ¶ *"Behold! My Servant whom I uphold, My Elect One in whom My soul delights! I have put My Spirit upon Him; He will bring forth justice to the Gentiles.*

e). And for all of this to be accomplished there is from this point onwards the certainty of the Lord's crucifixion and His resurrection – Mt 16:21 ¶ *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.*

7). Before we look at the parables in Matthew Chapter 13 in detail let's pause for a moment and acknowledge an uncomfortable parallel between Israel at Christ's first advent with respect to the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens and the 'Church' today. We will remember that Isaiah had prophetically recorded the spiritual condition that Israel would be in at the time of the Lord's first advent - Isa 1:5 *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.*

And that within his prophecy there was also the call to repentance – 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;*

With the promise of what would follow - Isa 1:19 *If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land;*

a). And we would know, because of Israel's religious leaders' refusal to repent that they did not believe their spiritual condition was that which Isaiah had recorded and therefore they saw no need to repent.

b). Now look at what we find in the Revelation concerning the 'Church' – Re 3:17 *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' --and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

The Lord makes clear the spiritual condition of the Church at large with respect to the Kingdom of the Heavens, but this condition is neither accepted nor believed, the Church at large having an altogether different view of itself.

c). There is also a call to repentance - Re 3:18 *"I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see. 19 "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.*

d). With the promise of what would follow - Re 3:20 *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. 21 "To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.*

e). And of course the circumstances that have led to Christendom's present spiritual condition and the reason why the Church at large holds an entirely different view of itself than that seen in the Revelation is explained for us through the parables in Matthew Chapter 13 which we are now going to look at.

8). Mt 13:3 *Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. 4 "And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. 6 "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. 7 "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. 8 "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. 9 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" 10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"*

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