

Sunday October 11<sup>th</sup> 2015  
Without a Parable  
Part Three

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, the 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 had seen last week that it is 'on the same day' – the same day that Israel's religious leaders demonstrate their climactic rejection of the 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, confirmed through the sign of the prophet Jonah 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). And we had seen that 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, in effect setting Israel aside 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.*

c). It is then this group, who at this point in time do not exist, those whom God will visit to take out of them a people for His name, who are the main protagonists in the parables which follow.

d). And then, the Lord having given the first of the 7 parables seen in this Chapter, His disciples come and ask Him a question, 'Why do you speak to them in parables?'

e). This is a revealing question, because as we had noted in our first week of study, this point in Matthew Chapter 13 marks a significant change in the Lord's earthly ministry. Up to this point He had used parables only sparingly, but from now on parables become the central means the Lord uses to teach. The disciples realize that something has changed and so they ask the question.

2). And we are blessed of course that the Lord's answer is recorded for us – Mt 13:11 *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.*

a). So, let's begin by noting from this verse that these parables are about making known 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven' with regards to a people other than Israel. Now the word 'mystery' here really doesn't have the same kind of idea we would associate with its use today, but rather it has to do with that which had always been present in the OT scriptures which would now be revealed to those who would have eyes to see.

b). And from our verse again we can see that it 'had been given' to the disciples to understand these mysteries, but to Israel's religious leaders and therefore the nation as a whole, this same understanding had 'not been given'.

c). So, what would make the difference? Is this a purely an arbitrary decision on the Lord's part? Well as we know from the scriptures that God does not act with partiality this clearly cannot be an arbitrary action.

d). So, what does make the difference? The answer to our question can be found in the word 'parable' itself. We will remember that 'parable' is just an English version of the Greek word and is not a translation, and in the Greek the word has to do with one thing put alongside another; which in this case would be one truth put alongside another truth in order to give a further understanding of that which had already been made known – that which had already been made known in the OT scriptures and that, coming out of those scriptures, that Christ had been teaching.

e). With this in mind let's remember 2 things – firstly, the gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens had always been present in the OT scriptures, the oracles of God that had been given to the Jews, and therefore this good news

was already in their possession – and secondly let's remember the message that was given by John the Baptist, Jesus, the 12 and the 70 -

*Mt 9:35 ¶ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

*Mt 10:5 ¶ These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: "Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. 6 "But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.....14 "And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 "Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!*

*Lu 10:1 ¶ After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.....8 "Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. 9 "And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.'*

f). The message proclaimed concerning the Kingdom of the Heavens could only draw from that which was already contained in the OT scriptures and we know that because of the actions of the religious leaders this message was rejected – it was neither received nor believed and was therefore not understood. This means that any truth now given through the use of parables that would build on the truth already presented could not be understood either. And in this sense understanding 'the mysteries of the kingdom', had not been given to the Jews.

g). The disciples on the other hand had received and believed the message and were in fact able to preach it themselves and therefore it was given to them to understand the mysteries of the kingdom which would now be set alongside the truth which they had already received and believed.

h). We can perhaps see this even more clearly through a few verses from 2 Corinthians which are talking about the Jews - *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.*

We can see in verse 14 that there is a 'veil' that 'remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament', a veil that prevents the Jews from understanding that which is contained in the OT scriptures, and we can see in this same verse that this veil is only 'taken away in Christ', only by realizing and accepting who the Christ is.

i). And as we know our Lord was neither received nor recognized as the Christ by the nation of Israel at His first advent - Joh 19:15 *But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar!"*

j). As a consequence of this the veil was not lifted and if fact remains in place for the Jews even today and cannot be lifted until that future day when they will finally realize who Jesus is and repent – when they will change their minds concerning their unbelief. Once this has happened the veil will have been lifted and the scriptures will be open to their understanding.

k). The rejection that we see of Christ and His Kingdom by the religious leaders is in stark contrast to the acceptance of the disciples – Joh 6:68 *But Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of age lasting life.*

*Mt 16:16 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.*

l). So, here then is the reason why it was given to the disciples to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven and not the Jews – and right here is the reason why all Christians are in a position to be able to receive and believe the word of the Kingdom.

3). *Mt 13:12 "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.*

a). And so, having answered His disciples question as to why He speaks to the Jews in parables the Lord then gives them some more information, based on His answer to their question, in the verses that follow, v12-17.

b). In v12 the Lord tells His disciples that 'whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance;' and this can only be referring to having an understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven – for those who have understanding of these mysteries, those who receive them and believe them, then more understanding will be given and that person will then have an abundance. We might see in this the progression from milk to meat to strong meat – going from faith to faith – the process of spiritual maturity.

c). Alongside this promise of abundance in the first half of the verse there is then a contrast drawn in the second half of v12 where we see those 'who do not have', and again this would be an understanding of the mysteries of the Kingdom of the Heavens, where 'even what he has will be taken away from him'.

d). Within the immediate context of these verses those 'who do not have' would be the Jews – now we will also remember from an earlier study that the Kingdom of the Heavens was promised to them as the physical descendants of Abraham and this would be 'what they have'; but because they neither received nor believed the Christ and His message and were therefore not able to understand the mysteries, even what should have been theirs by birth, the Kingdom of the Heavens, would now be taken from them.

e). As we look at this though I think that we need to see a broader application of this principle to include those who would become the Church because of what we find elsewhere in the scriptures. We find this same wording in Mark's gospel where it is placed between the account of the parable of the sower and the parable of the wheat and tares - Mr 4:23 *"If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."* 24 *Then He said to them, "Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. 25 "For whoever has, to him more will be*

*given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."*

f). We will note the first part of v24, 'take heed what you hear', which contextually would be the word of the Kingdom. The verse then goes on, 'with the same measure you use it'; with the same measure with which you use the Word which you hear, so, the Word will 'be measured [back] to you'. In other words, the more of the word of the Kingdom we receive, believe and put into practice the more the 'mysteries of the Kingdom' will be opened to our understanding – 'to you who hear more will be given'. This inevitably takes us to the idea of our being doers of the word and not hearers only. Something we have already seen from a slightly different perspective in - Lu 8:21 *But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."*

g). Simply then, those who receive the word of the Kingdom and believe it who then make use of it by putting it into practice are given more, but those who don't make use of it – 'even what he has will be taken away from him' – and what would the Christian have that could be taken away from him other than his soul/life in the age to come – Mt 25:27 *'So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. 28 'Therefore take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 29 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. 30 'And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'*

h). So then, to go back to our immediate context in Matthew Chapter 13, the Jews who do not have understanding, who consequently have what they do have, the Kingdom of the Heavens, taken from them are seen fulfilling that which was prophesied by Isaiah - 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.'*

i). And Paul uses exactly these same verses from Isaiah at the end of Acts Chapter 28, when the re-offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to Israel by the Church is finally withdrawn - Ac 28:25 *So when they did not agree among themselves, they departed after Paul had said one word: "The Holy Spirit spoke*

*rightly through Isaiah the prophet to our fathers, 26 "saying, 'Go to this people and say: "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; And seeing you will see, and not perceive; 27 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." 28 "Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"*

j). And set in contrast to the unseeing, dull of hearing, unbelieving Jew at Christ's first advent we have the disciples - Mt 13:16 *"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.*

k). How blessed then are we?

4). Following these verses that have come from the disciples question about why the Lord is speaking to the Jews in parables, the Lord then begins an explanation of the parable of the sower - Mt 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower:*

a). Seeing this we might well ask the question, 'Why does the Lord feel it is necessary to give an explanation of this parable to the disciples? And the answer can again be found in the word 'parable' itself. The parable of the sower is the first of the series of 7 parables that the Lord gives and each parable successively builds on the parable that has gone before and so if the first parable is understood correctly then the rest may easily be built on it, but if it is not understood correctly then only error can follow. That said, it would be a really good idea for us to make sure that we understand it correctly ourselves - Mr 4:13 *And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?*

b). The parable of the sower is divided into 4 parts and each part has to do with only one thing, the production of 'fruit' with respect to the word of the Kingdom by a people other than Israel, those who will become the one new man in Christ, with entry into a position of rulership in the Millennial Kingdom in view.

c). The importance of producing fruit is given to us in a very familiar verse some chapters later, in - Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it."*

So then, the Kingdom of the Heavens will only be given to those 'bearing the fruits of it' and this fruit can only be produced in relation to hearing the word of the Kingdom.

d). This is something John the Baptist had made known to the Pharisees at the beginning of his ministry - 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. 10 "And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.*

e). For Israel of course, at Christ's first advent, the production of fruit with respect to the Kingdom of the Heavens was non-existent, the ax having already been laid to the root of the tree. Or to say this same thing another way Mt 21:18 ¶ *Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. 19 And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you for the age." Immediately the fig tree withered away.*

f). The nation of Israel was [and still is] as barren as the fig tree, hence the Kingdom of the Heavens being taken from them and they have 'withered away'. Consequently they are unable to produce fruit in the present and will not be fruitful until the coming of Christ's Millennial Kingdom - Ge 25:1 ¶ *Abraham again took a wife, and her name was Keturah. 2 And she bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, and Shuah.*

g). However, the nation which would be brought into existence to produce fruit with regards to the Kingdom of the Heavens, would succeed where Israel had failed.

h). But the parable of the sower makes abundantly clear from the outset that not all those who hear the word of the Kingdom will produce fruit and therefore not all of those who hear the word of the Kingdom will find a place of rulership with Christ in the Kingdom Age - but some will - and here is our encouragement as we remember Joshua and Caleb, the 120 in the upper room and the heroes of the faith in Hebrews Chapter 11.

5). And so to return to where we started this morning - Mt 13:3 *Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, the sower went out to sow.*

a). In the original language the sower is seen to be 'the sower', a particular sower, not just any sower in a generic sense and if we go to the Lord's explanation of the second parable, the wheat and tares, we are told exactly who the Sower is - Mt 13:37 *He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.*

b). The sowing takes place in the field, which we are told is the world – Mt 13:38 *"The field is the world,*

c). Mt 13:4 *"And as he sowed, some [seed] fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. 5 "Some fell on stony places,*

If you look in your Bible you will see that the word 'seed' is written in italics which shows that it has been added by the translators and is not in the original manuscripts.

d). What we realize then is that the sowing that takes place is referring to Christians. Every Christian is 'sown' out in the world for the purpose of producing fruit – we are sown here in Jacksonville, others in Kenya, others in the UK and so on.

e). Where we find ourselves geographically is really of no consequence, what matters is the production of fruit wherever we find ourselves.

f). Now if we go to the parable of the sower as recorded by Mark we find this - Mr 4:14 *"The sower sows the word.*

And if we go to the same parable recorded by Luke we also find – Lu 8:11 *"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.*

g). So, in Matthew the 'seed' is Christians and in Mark and Luke the seed is the word of God – Do we have a problem here? Not at all – In the parable of the wheat and tares the Lord uses the word seed to refer to Christians – Mt 13:8 *.....the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom.....*

And we are told in the explanation to the parable of the sower –

Mt 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom*

h). The difference we find between the account in Matthew and that in Mark and Luke does not present us with a problem, but rather a complete composite picture – individual Christians are 'sown' out in the world and the word of the Kingdom is then 'sown' in the heart of that individual with the expectation that the production of fruit will follow.

i). But we will have to pick this up again next week, if the Lord is willing.