

THE PURPOSE OF PARABLES

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Matthew 13:1-17

1. After a confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.

NOTE: Jesus' ministry took place in private, in homes, in synagogues, and in public places, and ours should as well.

2. Though unpopular with the Jewish leaders, Jesus was still popular with many.

3. Here we find Jesus seated in a boat and speaking in parables to a large crowd on the shore.

4. Over the next several weeks we will be focusing on what are referred to as Kingdom Parables.

5. By Kingdom Parables we mean parables that describe the Kingdom of Heaven (God) as it will manifest itself on the earth during this current dispensation or, what is called, The Church Age.

6. This message will serve as an introduction and define some terms Jesus used.

I. The Kingdom of Heaven.

A. Universal Kingdom—meaning God's sovereign rule over all of His Creation.

1. "The Lord sat as King at the flood, yes, the Lord sits as King forever." Psalm 29:10

2. "The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His sovereignty rules over all (His Creation)." Psalm 103:19

NOTE: God's sovereignty is absolute regardless of what is going on in the world or in our lives.

B. Mediatorial Kingdom—manifested on earth in and through the lives of people.

1. Adam and Eve were to manage the earth as God's representatives.

2. Throughout human history God has worked through human instruments.

3. As followers of Jesus Christ we are "God's fellow workers," and "ambassadors for Christ."

4. Wherever Christ has been crowned, "King of kings and Lord of lords," the Kingdom of God (the rule and sovereignty of God) will manifest itself.

5. As we study the Kingdom Parables we will see that the kingdom of God on earth attract both true and false citizens.

C. Millennial Kingdom—the coming Kingdom of God on earth that will be ruled absolutely by the Lord Jesus Christ.

D. Eternal Kingdom—that which God has prepared for all those who know and love Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.

II. The mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. 11

A. A mystery could be called a sacred secret.

1. Many false religions are referred to as "mystery religions."

2. Some fraternal organizations like the Masons have secret oaths the members must swear, special secrets that only the member can know, and even secret names for God.

B. Biblically a mystery has to do with something previously hidden or unknown.

C. God's universal sovereignty over all of His Creation cannot be called a mystery because that truth is clearly taught in the Old Testament.

D. Additionally the Old Testament contains many Messianic passages that clearly point to the coming of the Messiah, but there was a mystery component involved.

E. What was a mystery, from an Old Testament perspective, is the Kingdom of Heaven as it is currently being manifest on the earth.

1. Matthew 13:34-35

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. 35 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."

2. Peter referred to this mystery in 1 Peter 1:10-12.

As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that would come to you made careful searches and inquiries, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven — things into which angels long to look.

III. Parables.

A. A parable is an earthly story with a spiritual application.

B. A parable, as used by Jesus, was designed to reveal and to conceal spiritual truth, and could not be fully understood unless it was explained.

C. Note the progression in this passage.

1. Jesus told the parable and then said, "He who has ears, let him hear." (If you can understand it, then understand).

2. His disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Why do You speak to them (only) in parables without any explanation?"

3. Jesus responded, "To you (who believe in Me) it has been granted to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them (who do not believe in Me) it has not been granted."

a. Parables confused and disarmed Jesus' enemies.

b. Parables also identified those who were truly Jesus' followers.

4. Luke 8:9-10 gives us some added insight into the exchange between Jesus and His followers.

His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. 10 And He said, "To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND."

5. In Mark we read the following related to parables.

With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; 34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples. Mark 4:33-34

APPLICATION

1. Note Jesus' encouraging words to His disciples.

a. "For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he shall have an abundance." 12a

b. "But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. 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." 16-17

2. Jesus also issued a dire warning to those who resist and argue against the truth when He said, "But whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him." 12b