

## Rediscovering Jesus in the Jewish Gospels

based on a series on the Parables by Dr. Lehman Straus

### The Purpose of Parables

#### A. Occasion

In Luke 19:14 the parable was given by Jesus because “He was nigh to Jerusalem and they thought the Kingdom should immediately appear.” (19:11) Wide-spread anticipation that Jesus was about to declare His kingdom.

### The Lessons of the Parable

1<sup>st</sup> lesson Rejection of the King postponed the Kingdom. Jesus didn’t lay aside His authority. But He did lay aside the full manifestation of His power and authority and accompanying blessings. Those were postponed. There was a temporary deferment of the physical kingdom that had been promised by the prophets to Israel.

#### B. Errant objections by replacement theologians

1. Christ didn’t offer the Kingdom in sincerity.
2. Promises of the OT have been cancelled.
3. The Kingdom is only spiritual.

In every statement “the kingdom is at hand” the word “repent” was the condition. There were exceptions to the promise of a kingdom. (John 3:3). Spiritual birth is necessary for entrance. Since the Kingdom offer was national, repentance was also required nationally. In John 3:3 the condition to enter the kingdom was regeneration. In Matthew 5:20 the condition was righteousness. The Leaders of Israel had rejected all three (repentance, regeneration righteousness) by Matthew 12. There are those who say it was not a legitimate offer of a kingdom, referring to Luke 17:20 where He said the kingdom of God is within you, indicating a spiritual rather than a physical kingdom. Jesus said the Kingdom comes “not with observation,” “within you” means that the offering of the Kingdom by the Messiah had been present in the midst of them. They had rejected Him and therefore it. In Luke 17:25 He indicated that things had changed. “But first He must suffer many things.” “and be rejected by this generation” On the road to Emmaus he told them not to be discouraged for “Christ must first suffer many things, and then enter into His Glory”. These parables describe a mystery form of the Kingdom until the Messianic Kingdom comes (Luke 24:26).

#### C. Objectives

Chapters 1-11 Valid offer of the kingdom

Chapter 12 rejection of the King and postponement of the Kingdom.

Chapter 13 God’s plan of salvation through Israel is extended to all men.

\*In the parables of Matthew 13 we have the total picture of God’s

plan of salvation for all mankind through the 1<sup>st</sup> century remnant of Jewish believers.

#### Matthew 13:1-17 the Purpose of the parables “because” (vs. 11)

The disciples asked, “Why do you speak to “them” in parables (vs.10). It was the first time He spoke to the multitudes in parable form. It was previously just to the disciples. He had just given the parable of the sower, and before it could be explained the disciples asked why He even told it to them (the leaders of Israel). Jesus’ response, the purpose of the parables for “them,” (the leaders of Israel) is the fulfillment of their prophesied rejection (vs. 14; Isaiah 6:9-10).

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“to you is given” – revealed truth; to “them it is not given” - concealed truth

### **1. Beneficial only to those who hear with faith.**

The disciples heard and received truth. (Matthew 4:18-22)

**2. Consequential to those who hear with unbelief.** Multitudes had heard and rejected the truth. The truth they refused was now lost to them. Lacked faith in the divine truth. It was willful, they did not understand because they would not (Matthew 13:14,15). God didn't harden them, they did it to themselves. Their rejection was deliberate. They refused to repent of their need for regeneration and His righteousness and were unwilling to renounce self-righteousness and self-rule. Anyone who anesthetizes his heart, muffles his ears, and shuts his eyes to the Word of God will be punished by being allowed to have his own way. The parable was describing the listeners heart condition and the four types of heart conditioned responses to the Word of God.

(vs. 10) Blessed are your eyes and ears. Obedience to the truth precedes more truth.

(vs. 12) Parables were not spoken to deliberately hinder understanding. He was giving a second chance although they would not hear. (vs. 18; Isa. 6:9)

### **Parable of Sower – addresses how people hear the truth.**

**D. Opportunity** - The disciples who received Him would now know the phases of the new mystery form of the kingdom in the interim before the Messianic Kingdom comes.

1. (Vs. 18) Anyone among the multitude repenting of the hardness of their heart could be saved. Hear ye therefore. . . “here's your chance.”
2. (Vs. 15) is a judicial punishment on a deliberate, rejective blindness.

### **E. The Obscurity of the Truth**

1. This series is to uncover and reveal that which had been hidden and secret.
2. He was about to make known the events to follow His first appearance through His second coming. The time between the rejection and the reception of Him by Israel.
3. These prophecies are presently in the process of fulfillment.

### **Matthew 13 contains 7 parables Mysteries of the Kingdom (13:11)**

Mystery is a truth which heretofore has been hidden but is now revealed. (13:35) These parables revealed things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

4. The Messiah would return to Heaven before He returns to establish the Kingdom. During his absence the seed of God's Word must be sown in the “field” = the World. (13:38)

### **III. Overview of the parables**

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The nine parables of Matthew 13:1-53 (including the parallel accounts in Mark 4:1-34 and Luke 8:4-18), describe the outworking of the Mystery Kingdom in the present age. Perhaps the best word to describe this period is “Christendom.” While Israel awaits the restoration of their prophesied Messianic, Millennial Kingdom, Jesus is seated in Heaven as the Great High Priest making intercession for all who by saving faith are members of His spiritual Kingdom which is “within you.” We as believers i.e.: the Church do not replace Israel in His kingdom

plan. While their national Kingdom is deferred not deleted, Jew and gentile are saved and enter His spiritual household/kingdom or His rule in our hearts and lives. He treats us as brethren, and Gentiles as adopted children, not subjects. It therefore is not our role to subjugate the nations under His control as post-millennialism believes. The history of “Christendom” was marred by a Roman Catholic Church State hybrid who believed they were to forcibly subjugate all under Christ. Even under western European Protestantism this belief continued as evidenced by kings’ authority over the national church in many cases. The cathedrals of Europe were built by taxing all citizens whether they were believers or not. This was a satanic corruption of the true church based on a misinterpretation of the kingdom. The expansive scope and the devastating results are seen in these parables. Especially as seen in the third parable of the “tares” (Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43), and in the fourth parable of the mustard seed which grows into a monstrous tree filled with good and evil birds (Matthew 13:31-32). When Hell could not prevail against the true Church that Jesus was building, Satan tempted the persecuted church with state protection and power in consolidating with the state. His temptation could only be believable as he twisted the actual Kingdom truths that Jesus taught here. Once replacement of Israel by the church had become accepted orthodox doctrine, the apostate church turned against the Jews and replaced the clear gospel of salvation by faith with a false gospel and a top-down hierarchical ecclesiastical government. The spiritual darkness of the Middle Ages almost snuffed out the light of the Gospel. Into this darkness Satan spawned Roman Catholicism and Islam. The former replaced Jesus with Mary and the latter replaced Jehovah with Allah. We will take more time to expound all these parables. It is key to understand the “sea change” at this juncture in Matthew. His method of teaching changed to parables (Matthew 13:34-35). He stopped preaching the gospel of the “Kingdom of Heaven/God is at hand.” He started saying the “Kingdom of Heaven/God” is “like” or “like unto.” He privately expounded the parables to the believing disciples (Mark 4:33-34). He was stopping the momentum of populism that would have had the multitudes attempting to make him king to revolt against Rome. “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone” (John6:15).

### **IV. The Parable of the Sower**    Matthew 13; Mark 4; Luke 8

Kingdom of Heaven in this age is not the same as the Church. It began with the rejection of Christ and concludes with the return of Christ at the end of the tribulation. The Mystery form of the Kingdom does include the Church as well as the believers in the Tribulation.

#### **A. This Parable Represents nominal “Christianity”**    Matthew 13:3-9

The seed is the Word of God (Luke 8:11; Heb 4:12; I Pet 1:23).

#### **B. Jesus’ present priority is the sowing the word of the Gospel.**

Later His priority setting up the Kingdom in Israel.

The parable gives four classes of hearers or “hearts”

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(Matthew 13:19, Mark 4:15, Luke 8:12, 15)

1. **Wayside Hearer** (Vs. 4) fell on hard, beaten path. Incapable of receiving it, “understandeth it not” (Vs. 19.) May have heard it often but is hard hearted (2 Cor. 4:4). “have overcome and the Word abideth in you” (I Jn. 2:13, 14; Luke 8:12). Lest they should believe you” (foreshadows the partial response of the world to the Word. There will not be a worldwide conversion.
  
2. **Stoney Ground Hearer** (Vs’s. 5, 6; Mark 4:5)  
Immediately (Mark 4:16; 4:17 (Vs. 20, 21) the hearer responds easily, emotionally, and enthusiastically to a charismatic personality, popular religious movement. External outward response, with no thought. The most visible group (2 Tim 3:5; Jn. 6:60, 66).
  
3. **Thorny Ground** vs. 7  
Divided heart. (Vs. 22) cares of this world (Mark 4:19; Luke 8:14)  
Thorns are not an internal lack of life, but external obstacles to fruitfulness. (Matt. 6:24) you cannot serve God and Mammon. The Weeds take over and the Word is choked out.
  
4. **Good Ground** (Vs. 8)  
Hears, understands, bears fruit (Vs. 23)  
2 of the 4 soils had real life, 1 of 4 was fruitful  
1/3 are 100% fruitful (I Cor. 3:6) God gives the increase.

### **C. The Prophecy in a Parable** – This is the age of sowing the Word of the Gospel to the World.

The purpose of the Gospel of His death, burial, and resurrection for salvation given by the Jewish early church to the Gentiles is explained in Romans chapter 11. The Gentile church is indebted to the Jewish remnant and to the nation of Israel. “Now if the fall of them *be* the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness? I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: **Even so have these also now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy**” (Romans 11:13- 31).

The Gospel is coming back full circle to the Jewish people and to Israel as this Mystery form of the Kingdom age comes to a close before their time of Jacob’s trouble – the Tribulation begins.