

## THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

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### Matthew 13

Within the parables that are in this chapter, they have many times been taken out of the true context of the gospel of Jesus Christ to mean the opposite of the truth. The context that will be hopefully revealed to us, in our hearts and our minds, is that it is really God, through Christ that is doing the seeking out the lost sheep, Christ Jesus paid the price for our salvation, Christ Jesus is doing the leading as the Good Shepherd, and that Jesus is, as He said He is, "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." (John 14:6) Ultimately that leads us to Jesus' warning to "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13) It is then up to us to heed the call to follow Jesus, as He is also the gate or door of the sheep.

### The Parable of the Sower

On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. 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. [For more context, in Matthew 10, Jesus sent out his disciples, warning them that He was sending them out as sheep amongst wolves. He said to therefore be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves". (Matthew 10:16) Ultimately that is the operating in the fruit of the Spirit, for us who have believed on Christ and have received Him. That fruit being comprised of "love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control." (Galatians 5:22-23) Jesus also warned His disciples that they would be "hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." We know of one clear example of one who did not endure to the end-Judas, the betrayer of Christ. It is also in Jesus' charge to His disciples, that He stated, "And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it." (Matthew 10:38-39) Jesus then began preaching, by denouncing the cities that had rejected Him, yet followed it up in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Then, Jesus was confronted (verbally attacked-to trip Him up and to discredit Him) by the Pharisees. They were the ones who claimed to know the law of God. They kind of missed the mark though, in a huge way, as really the whole of the law of God, was and is as Jesus said, to love God with all that is in you and to love others as God loves them. (Mark 12:30-31, Matthew 22:37-39) Then, just prior to Matthew 13, Jesus is told

that His mother and brothers wanted to see Him. "And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother." (Matthew 12:49-50) FOLLOW JESUS! [So now, we have Jesus on a boat, preaching to the folks on land] Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

### **The Purpose of Parables**

And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?" 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. 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. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 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; 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.' But blessed are your eyes for they see, and your ears for they hear; 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."

### **The Parable of the Sower Explained**

"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." [that is summarized nicely by **Ephesians 2:8-10**, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we

are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”]

### **The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares**

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the grain had sprouted and produced a crop, then the tares also appeared. So the servants of the owner came and said to him, ‘Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?’ He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ The servants said to him, ‘Do you want us then to go and gather them up?’ But he said, ‘No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and at the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, “First gather together the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ’ ”

### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

Another parable He put forth to them, saying: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.” [This is not the same parable that Jesus gave in **Matthew 17** about having the faith of a mustard seed but the two parables can combine to give us the understanding that the even small measure of faith that we are given to believe on Christ Jesus for life everlasting in God’s eternal kingdom is and will flourish into a great tree for all of us birds to nest in collectively-all those who have believed on and received Christ]

### **The Parable of the Leaven**

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.” [This parable is commonly misinterpreted to mean that once the leaven, being the kingdom of heaven, is at its fullness, Christ will return, as His people have ushered in, so to speak, His kingdom. Yet, leaven (yeast) is always considered in Scripture to be an impurity, aka sin. So this parable complements what Jesus said in His Olivet Discourse, saying, “But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be.” (**Matthew 24:37-39**) Jesus also similarly in meaning said, “And because lawlessness [sin] will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures [in Christ] to the end shall be saved.” (**Matthew 24:12**)]

### **Prophecy and the Parables**

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

### **The Parable of the Tares Explained**

Then Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field." He answered and said to them: "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. **The field is the world**, the good seeds are the sons of the kingdom, but the tares are the sons of the wicked one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels. Therefore as the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who **practice lawlessness**, [1 John 3:4, "Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness."] and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"

### **The Parable of the Hidden Treasure**

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. [In verse 38, Jesus had said that the field was the world. This parable is not speaking of a sinner who buys a field and then hides the treasure. That doesn't make any sense. But as the field is the world, Jesus paid the price for the world and then hid His kingdom of heaven in the world. He then though reveals to us how to find it-in Christ alone. "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (John 5:12) As we are told by the Apostle Paul, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For **you were bought at a price**; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)]

### **The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price**

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." [Who is that pearl of great price? You! "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3:16-17)]

### **The Parable of the Dragnet**

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and

gnashing of teeth." Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." 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."

[That can be explained in the Words of Christ Himself, "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill." (Matthew 5:17) That was beautifully explained by the Apostle Paul in Romans 8:1-4, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."]

### **Jesus Rejected at Nazareth**

Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables, that He departed from there. When He had come to His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished and said, "Where did this Man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then did this Man get all these things?" So they were offended at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own country and in his own house." Now He did not do many mighty works there because of their unbelief."

In closing, let us consider the words of the Apostle Peter, after the death and resurrection of Christ Jesus and after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. "But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, [including Christ Himself] that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began." (Acts 3:18-21) Jesus will surely come back according to the fullness of the leaven, yet He is also calling to all who will listen to believe on Him and receive Him. As Jesus promised, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (John 14:23) We don't have to wonder if we are saved, or worry about how bad things are getting in this world. As Jesus also promises, "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." (John 10:10)