

Matthew 13 - Kingdom Parables; Jesus' Rejection at Nazareth

III. King's interim kingdom program (Matt 13:1—20:28)

(1) Kingdom parables (13:1-52)

(A) Parables given while out of the house (13:1-35)

- (a) Parable of the sower (13:1-9)
- (b) Explanation of the necessity of the parabolic presentation (13:10-17)
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(2) Why the interim program was necessary (Matt 13:53—14:12)

(A) Christ rejected in his hometown (13:53-58)

Parables

A parable may be briefly defined as a figurative narrative that is true to life and is designed to convey through analogy some specific spiritual truth usually relative to God's kingdom program. A proper interpretation of Jesus' parables should give attention to the following five steps:

1. Understand the Setting
2. Historical Setting
3. Cultural Background
4. Uncover the Need that Prompted the Parable - was the parable in response to a question, request, or action of others?
5. Analyze the Structure and Details of the Parable - is there a literary structure that provides clues to the meaning? Is there a historical, chronological, geographical or ideological progression that the parables fits in to?

Introduction to Matt 13

The die is cast. The religious leaders have now openly declared their opposition to the Messiah. The people of Israel are amazed at the power of Jesus and His speech, but they fail to recognize Him as their King. Not seeing the Messiahship of Jesus in His words and works, they have separated the fruit from the tree. Because of this opposition and spiritual apathy, the King adapts His teaching method and the doctrine concerning the coming of the kingdom to the situation. [Toussaint]

Matthew 13

III. King's interim kingdom program (Matt 13:1—20:28)

(1) Kingdom parables (13:1-52)

(A) Parables given while out of the house (13:1-35)

(a) Parable of the sower (13:1-9) (Cf. Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-8)

1 On **that day** Jesus had gone out of the house and was sitting by the sea.

1 That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea.

1 That day Jesus left the house and sat down beside the sea.

1 The same day Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the sea side.

- "...that day" - Matthew linked the parabolic teaching in this chapter with Israel's rejection of their Messiah recorded in Matt 12

— These parables were a response to Israel's rejection; there is a direct cause and effect between Israel's national rejection of her Messiah, with the teachings that Jesus gives in this chapter

— His action in Matt 13:1 was indicative of a great dispensational crisis, it was an anticipation of what is found developed at length in Acts—God, temporarily, turning away from the Jews and turning unto the Gentiles.

2 And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.

2 And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.

2 Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat down, while the entire crowd stood on the shore.

2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

- So many people came that Jesus sat in a boat just offshore, where more people could hear Him

- Jesus taught the first four parables (Sower, Wheat/Tares, Mustard Seed, Leaven) openly, in front of a large crowd. He did not interpret the parables for the crowd; they would have to figure them out on their own, and their disbelief in Him as Messiah clouded their understanding.

— The parables weren't for the entire nation (otherwise He wouldn't have taught in parables); they were for the Remnant (which was a fairly large group at this point), and the disciples

The Coming Kingdom 17 An Interim Age: Sower (Matt 13:1-9,18-23).

3 And He told them many things in parables, saying, "**Behold, the sower went out to sow;**

3 And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, "**Behold, the sower went out to sow;**

3 Then he began to tell them many things in parables. He said, "**Listen! A farmer went out to sow.**

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, **Behold, a sower went forth to sow;**

- "...the sower" - God is the Sower, and the seed is His Word (Is 55:10-11)

- "...went out" - two simple words, but represents a total sea-change for Matthew's Jewish readers. To be taught that people would "go out" and preach the gospel to others was a completely foreign concept to the Jews of that day.

— Up to this point in Jewish history, the strategy was not "go out" but "come and see"

— Queen of Sheba traveled 1,200 miles to sit at Solomon's feet and learn of his wisdom (Cf. 2 Chr 9)

— God's strategy in the OT was to build a nation, to build a temple, which would attract the world to "come and see" and learn of Him. Israel was to be His example, and the blessings they would receive through their obedience would show the world the grace and goodness of God.

— This is why in the Mosaic Law, all Jewish men were required to return to Jerusalem for three Jewish feast days throughout the year

— Israel knew nothing of a "go out and preach" strategy throughout the OT

— When Jesus 2x overturned tables, He did so because the money changers misrepresented God...their presence made visitors for the Jewish feasts believe that God was only interested in their gold and ruining the testimony of God.

— You do not find God sending out missionaries in the OT...only prophet who went on mission was Jonah, who didn't want to go

— Once the Church Age is over and the kingdom has come to the earth, the strategy will return from a "go" strategy back to a "come and see" strategy. Jesus will be reigning in

Jerusalem, and the nations will need to go there to worship the King. Failure to do so will result in judgment (Zech 14:16-18).

— People try to argue that these parables describe the kingdom today. The first clue is that a sower went out to sow. The minute Jesus starts talking about missionary work, you know He can't be describing the kingdom because the missions strategy in the kingdom will revert to "come and see (Is 2:2-3)."

— "If we build it, they will come" - this is from a movie, not from Scripture. Unfortunately it's a missions strategy for far too many churches today. This was God's strategy for OT Israel, not a strategy for the NT Church.

— God's strategy in the NT, through the Great Commission, is to "Go" and make disciples

— The Church's mission is to glorify God by building up the saints...teach them to the world; once the saints become equipped, they go out to serve/minister/evangelize the world (Eph 4:11-13)

— The goal is not to bring unsaved people to Church so they can hear a sermon and sing some songs...the pastor equips the saints, then the saints go out and evangelize the world

— This is a clue that the Interim Age is a parenthesis, in that a completely new strategy is being employed (dispensation = "house rules")

4 and as he sowed, some seeds fell **beside the road**, and the **birds** came and ate them up.

4 and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.

4 As he was sowing, some seeds fell along the path, and birds came and ate them up.

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

- "...beside the road" - the gospel of the kingdom is preached, but there is no understanding on the part of the hearer

- "...birds" - *peteinon*, birds, representative of Satan (the evil one, Cf. v19)

— With the hearers lack of understanding, the Gospel doesn't penetrate their hearts or minds due to them not understanding the message. Then, Satan comes along and takes away the seed so it has no chance to take root.

— Birds are often described as evil (negative) in Scripture (although in some contexts, they are related as good): Abrahamic Covenant confirmation, Abraham shewed the birds away (Gen 15:11); talking about covenant curses (Deut 28:26); the destruction of the city/system of Antichrist (Rev 18:2).

5 Others fell on the **rocky places**, where they did not have much soil; and they sprang up immediately, because they had no depth of soil.

5 Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of soil.

5 Other seeds fell on stony ground, where they did not have a lot of soil. They sprouted at once because the soil wasn't deep.

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

- "...rocky places" - without root because there was very little top soil

- The roots could not penetrate the limestone underneath to obtain the necessary moisture from the subsoil

6 But after the sun rose, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

6 But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

6 But when the sun came up, they were scorched. Since they did not have any roots, they dried up.

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

- When the hot weather came, the seeds germinated quickly, but did not have the necessary resources to sustain continued growth

- The seed ended up failing under pressure/persecution

7 Others fell among the **thorns**, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

7 Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.

7 Other seeds fell among thorn bushes, and the thorn bushes grew higher and choked them out.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

- "...thorns" - represent the cares of this world

- Thorns not helpful for seed growth; the thorns choked out the growing seed, illustrating how the cares of this life will choke out the nourishment that the seed needs, robbing it of light and nutrients

8 But others fell on the **good soil** and yielded a crop, some a **hundred, some sixty, and some thirty times as much**.

8 And others fell on the good soil and *yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

8 But other seeds fell on good soil and produced a crop, some 100, some 60, and some 30 times what was sown.

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

- "...good soil" - some seed fell upon the good ground and produced a crop
- "...hundred, some sixty, some thirty" - we shouldn't expect identical levels of fruitfulness in all people, since believers grow spiritually at different rates
- Notice the decline in the fruit yield

The same Sower and the same Seed produced no crop, some crop and much crop, depending upon the soil.

9 The one who has ears, let him hear."

9 He who has ears, let him hear."

9 Let the person who has ears listen!"

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The parable of the Sower/Soils teaches that the sowing of the Gospel will be preached throughout the course of the mystery age with varying responses based upon how the heart has been prepared. Understanding this first parable is key to understanding the subsequent parables (Mark 4:13), therefore Jesus details the interpretation (v18-23). Responders to the truth will be given additional revelation (Matt 13:1-9,18-23).

The Purpose of the Parables (Matt 13:10-17,34-35; Mark 4:10-12; Luke 8:9-10)

While Christ revealed the kingdom mysteries in parabolic form, He did not give the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7) or the missions discourse (Matt 10) in parabolic form. Why did Christ reveal the kingdom mysteries in parabolic form? In addition to fulfilling prophecy (Matt 13:34-35; Ps 78:2), the parabolic form of teaching allowed Him to simultaneously conceal and reveal (Matt 13:16-17). Christ desired to conceal truth from the nation of Israel since they had already rejected the offer of the kingdom (Matt 12). Such concealment was actually merciful since the disclosure of more truth would have brought first-century Israel into even greater condemnation. He also desired to reveal truth to the disciples, the Remnant, and to believers in the Church Age.

Earlier, Christ had explained that greater revelation brings forth greater accountability (Matt 11:20-24). The disclosure of more truth to the nation at this point would not have helped Israel but rather would have only increased her degree of discipline since she had already chosen to reject the kingdom offer. On the other hand, Christ wanted to reveal truth to the believing remnant to prepare them for their leadership roles (Eph 2:20) in the soon to be birthed Church. Because they were to be His earthly representatives throughout

the mystery age, they needed full information concerning the spiritual characteristics of this new age.

In v10-17, Jesus told His disciples that He would speak to "this people" (Israel) in parables in order to blind them to the truth because of their rejection of Him. However, believers could come to understand the meaning of His parables because we are receptive of the revelation offered by Christ. All of Jesus parables relate to Israel in some way, shape or form, and they tell us something about God's plan for the future.

The Use of Parables

Up to Matt 12, Jesus had authenticated His power by various miracles. But growing opposition to the King climaxed when Israel's leaders concluded that Jesus worked not by divine power but by satanic power (Matt 9:34; 12:22-37). At the end of Matt 12, the die was cast. Therefore, Jesus turned to His disciples and began to instruct them using parables.

The word "parable" comes from two Greek words, which together mean "to throw alongside." A parable, like an illustration, makes a comparison between a known truth and an unknown truth; it throws them alongside each other.

This became the only means of communication with the multitudes. Jesus never explained them to the public, only in private to the disciples! That means that the meaning of those parables are things that were hidden up until then. Can those truths be found in the OT? No, because if they were in the OT they were not kept secret since the foundation of the world (Matt 13:35)! The fact that they *are* hidden up until now tells us this is new information.

The disciples asked Jesus why He was speaking in parables. The Lord gave three reasons:

1. He was communicating through parables in order to continue to reveal truth to His disciples (Matt 13:11-12). The Lord was making known to the disciples the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. This term in the NT referred to truths not revealed in the OT but which now were made known to those instructed. Now Jesus unveiled certain additional facts not given in the OT about His reign on earth.
2. Jesus spoke in parables to *hide* the truth from unbelievers. Secrets of the Kingdom would be given to the disciples, but hidden from those who rejected Him (Matt 13:11). In fact, even what they had previously known would no longer be clear to them (Matt 13:12).

3. He spoke in parables to fulfill prophecy (Is 6:9-10). As Isaiah began his ministry, God told him that people would not comprehend his message. Jesus preached the Word of God and many people saw but they did not truly perceive; they heard but did "not understand" (Matt 13:13-15). Many OT prophets had predicted that the Messiah would deliver the nation Israel and establish His kingdom on the earth. Jesus came and offered the Kingdom, but the nation rejected Him. The "secrets" of the kingdom now reveal that an entire Age would intervene between Israel's rejection of the King and her later acceptance of Him. When you study Eph 3 and some other passages, you will discover there is a major truth *hidden* in OT—The Church! Paul reveals to us that these Parables deal with the Church (Eph 3:1-5ff).

(b) Explanation of the necessity of the parabolic presentation (13:10-17)

- 10 And the disciples came up and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"
10 And the disciples came and said to Him, "Why do You speak to them in parables?"
10 Then the disciples came and asked Jesus, "Why do you speak to people in parables?"
10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?
- The disciples asked this question after Jesus finished giving the parables to the crowd (Cf. Mark 4:10). The plural "parables" suggests this.
— Matthew apparently rearranged the chronology of the teaching to help his readers understand Jesus' reasons for teaching in parables at this point, instead of after the discourse.

11 And Jesus answered them, **"To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.**

11 Jesus answered them, **"To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.**

11 He answered them, **"You have been given knowledge about the secrets of the kingdom from heaven, but it hasn't been given to them,**

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

- "...mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" - Jesus wanted to give new revelation ("mysteries") concerning the messianic kingdom to His disciples, but not to the multitudes. This is revelation not found in the OT, specifically what the kingdom heirs ("sons of the kingdom") will experience on earth before the kingdom arrives.

— This is confirmed by v35, that Christ was saying things "which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Thus, in these parables, Christ was making known what was outside the scope of OT prediction, something which God had not made known to

Israel through the prophets. In no way do these parables teach a “mystery” form of the kingdom.

— “mysteries” - *mystērion*, that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by divine revelation; new revelation

— In English, “mystery” refers to something that can be learned but must be searched out with great diligence

— In Greek, “mystery” is something that has been newly disclosed by God. Human beings are completely unable to know this “mystery” other than by revelation from God (it is knowledge that is outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension). But now, after being revealed by God, it is in plain view.

— If something is knowable from the OT, it is not a mystery. So the NT mysteries contained in Matt 13 (and Mark 4) cannot refer to what is clearly known from the OT.

— The parables of Mark 4 (and Matt 13) are explicitly said to contain the mysteries of the kingdom. The same is not said of other parables.

— Jesus describes both the “inter-advent age” and the “church age” as “mysteries”

— Jesus was revealing some of God’s plans concerning the future of the messianic kingdom, but He was not allowing the unbelieving multitudes to understand these plans.

— This is a stark change from what had been taking place before. Up to this point, the gospel of the kingdom was proclaimed openly and clearly to the cities and leaders of Israel. Now, Jesus is withdrawing from the crowds and offering new truths only to His circle of disciples.

- “...them”- Israel

12 For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

12 For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.

12 because to anyone who has something, more will be given, and he will have more than enough. But from the one who doesn’t have anything, even what he has will be taken away from him.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

- Spiritual insight is given to believers so we can know the mysteries of the kingdom; it is not for those still in darkness

— We should be thankful for spiritual blessings and not take them for granted (Cf. 25:29)

— The disciples had access into the kingdom through their faith in Christ. God would give them greater understanding, which would result in abundance of blessing.

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

13 That's why I speak to them in parables, because 'they look but don't see, and they listen but don't hear or understand.'

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

- Jesus restated His reason for using parables, in terms of human perception instead of divine intention (v11-12)

— Unbelievers were unable to understand what He had to reveal because they had refused to accept a more basic revelation, namely, about Jesus and the imminence of the kingdom.

14 And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU SHALL KEEP ON LISTENING, BUT SHALL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU SHALL KEEP ON LOOKING, BUT SHALL NOT PERCEIVE;

14 In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; You will keep on seeing, but will not perceive;

14 "With them the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says: 'You will listen and listen but never understand. You will look and look but never comprehend,

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

- Quoting Is 6:9-10, where God told His prophet that widespread unbelief, and consequent divine hardening, would be what he would experience in his ministry

15 FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES, OTHERWISE THEY MIGHT SEE WITH THEIR EYES, HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND RETURN, AND I WOULD HEAL THEM.'

15 For the heart of this people has become dull, With their ears they scarcely hear, And they have closed their eyes, Otherwise they would see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, And understand with their heart and return, And I would heal them.'

15 for this people's heart has become dull, and their ears are hard of hearing. They have shut their eyes so that they might not see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and turn, "and I would heal them.'

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

- The context of the passage explained that Israel's hardness would continue until the land laid in ruins
- This prophecy was not completely fulfilled by the Babylonian exile, as the hardened state was still present in Jesus' day, and today
- Most Jews will remain unresponsive until their land is again desolated in the Tribulation

Is 6:9-10:

9 And He said, "Go, and tell this people: 'Keep on listening, but do not understand; And keep on looking, but do not gain knowledge.'

10 "Make the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes blind, So that they will not see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed."

16 But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

16 But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

16 "How blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear!

16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

17 For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.

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*.

17 I tell all of you with certainty, many prophets and righteous people longed to see the things you see but did not see them, and to hear the things you hear but did not hear them."

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them* ; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

- The disciples were "blessed" because they saw what unbelievers could not see, and also what many prophets and righteous from the past longed to see, but could not.

— Jesus is referring to OT prophets and believers who wanted more revelation about the kingdom than they had

— Jesus' claim of being able to reveal more than the OT prophets knew was a claim to being more of a prophet. Only God could claim to do what He claimed to be doing.

- v11, along with v16-17 make it clear that the kingdom mysteries outlined in Matt 13 (the time period between Israel's formal rejection of the Messiah (12:24) and the Second Coming) represent new truths concerning the kingdom, not disclosed in the OT (Eph 3:9; Rom 16:25-26).

(c) Interpretation of the parable of the sower (13:18-23) (Cf. Mark 4:13-20; Luke 8:11-15)

The Coming Kingdom 17 An Interim Age: Sower (Matt 13:1-9,18-23).

18 "Listen then to the parable of the sower.

18 "Hear then the parable of the sower.

18 "Listen, then, to the parable about the farmer.

18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

- Jesus interprets His first parable to help His disciples understand both it and the others that followed

— If the disciples did not understand this parable, they could not understand the others (Cf. Mark 4:13)

19 When anyone hears the **word of the kingdom** and does not understand *it*, the evil *one* comes and **snatches away** what has been sown in his heart. This is the one sown *with seed* beside the road.

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.

19 When anyone hears the word about the kingdom yet doesn't understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

- "...word of the kingdom" - the "message" of the kingdom; this is what is being sown (preached). It represents the kingdom's values and future certainty, which is what enters people.

— When you preach the gospel and someone accepts it, the kingdom doesn't enter that person. The message about the manifestation of the kingdom enters that person.

— They understand that they have a kingdom that they belong to, which transcends their lives on this earth. It's not a statement that the kingdom is here, it's a statement that they've trusted in the gospel and have the certainty of the coming kingdom.

— The difference between the kingdom and the "word of the kingdom" is that the "kingdom" is the kingdom, a time when Jesus Christ will reign on earth for 1,000 years. The "word of the kingdom" is the message of the kingdom that is preached.

- Some people heard Jesus' preaching about the kingdom, but, like hard soil, the truth did not penetrate their hearts. Satan ("the evil one") snatched the message away before they

really understood it.

- "...snatches away" - a believer's attention span to listen to the things of God is often very short. A 40-minute sermon is usually too much for many Christians to remain attentive.

— This is because Satan is at work in our minds trying to distract us, get us thinking about something or someone else. There are dozens of tactics that Satan uses to distract us when the Word of God is being shared or taught.

— This is the natural course of spiritual warfare that takes place. This parable actually reveals the strategies that Satan uses to distract or muddle the Word of God as it goes out, because Satan understands that the Word of God is powerful, living, active, and sharper than any two-edged sword. He knows that if someone receives the Word of God, understands it, meditates on it, either through private devotion or teaching, your life will be different. So he's working in these parables, in this age, to deny this from happening.

20 The one sown *with seed* on the rocky places, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

20 The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy;

20 As for what was sown on the stony ground, this is the person who hears the word and accepts it joyfully at once,

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that hears the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and **when** affliction or persecution occurs because of the word, immediately he falls away.

21 yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.

21 but since he doesn't have any root in himself, he lasts for only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes along because of the word, he immediately falls away.

21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

- "...when" - not "if" persecution arises; we should anticipate affliction and persecution in this life

- Their initial response to the message Jesus preached was enthusiastic reception, and gave hope for much fruit to follow. However, external pressures, a little persecution, and they are on to the next fad; there have no roots.

— They do not have adequate rooting in the truth, so they soon fade and wither

22 And the one sown *with seed* among the thorns, this is the one who hears the word, and the anxiety of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

22 And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

22 As for what was sown among the thorn bushes, this is the person who hears the word, but the worries of life and the deceitful pleasures of wealth choke the word so that it can't produce a crop.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.

- They mean well but they get swept up in the cares of this world. They allow the other concerns of life to crowd out their commitment to Jesus.

- They permit the competing concerns of life to take priority and precedence over spiritual development (Cf. 19:16-22)

- The present life, rather than the life to come, and the present treasure, rather than future treasure, capture their affections

- These "thorns" are deceitful...they can drain spiritual vitality before the person realizes what is happening

- The world makes its demands on you and the thorns choke out any spiritual fruit.

23 But the one sown *with seed* on the good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears **fruit** and produces, some a hundred, some sixty, and some thirty *times as much*."

23 And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."

23 But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the person who hears the word, understands it, and produces a crop that yields 100, 60, or 30 times what was sown."

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

- This person understands the message about the kingdom, and responds appropriately. They eventually become productive believers.

- "...fruit" - in context, represents increasing understanding of, and proper response to, divine revelation

Theme: In this new mystery age of time, when the kingdom is not present, the gospel will be preached, but it will have different results, depending on who hears the gospel. The soils represent different conditions of the human heart, just like soil has to be prepared to hear the gospel so it can become fruitful. In this new age, the gospel will go out with differing results, depending on the heart condition of the hearers. This parable also teaches that we shouldn't expect that the world will get converted.

Four Soils (Summary)

1. Roadside - without understanding; birds steal the seed away
 - The pharisees and religious leaders, who refused to believe
2. Stony places - received with joy, belief (Luke 8:13), shallow faith (John 6:66)
3. Among thorns - too entangled in the cares of this world
4. Good ground - hearing and understanding, bear fruit (Luke 8:1-3)

There's a debate on how many of these four soils is saved. Definitely the good soil is saved, because it bears fruit. It's likely that the rocky soil is saved because the word was received with joy, and it sprang up, but it had no depth, so the afflictions and persecutions burned the chute. They made no progress in the second tense of salvation, sanctification. Some see a third soil in the same way, just with different excuses for not making progress in sanctification.

However, what is clear is that only one in four soils does the seed take root and begin to bare fruit. This is the only soil where the person does not just become a believer, but becomes a disciple. So if the gospel is only going to be productive on 1-of-4 human hearts, how could this parable be describing the kingdom? This scenario bears no resemblance to the kingdom conditions described in Is 11:9.

(d) Parable of the wheat and tares (13:24-30)

[The Coming Kingdom 18 An Interim Age: Wheat & Tares \(Matt 13:24-30,36-43\)](#)

24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven **is like a man who sowed good seed in his field.**

24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven **may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.**

24 He presented another parable to them: "The kingdom from heaven **may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field.**

24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, **The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:**

- "...is like" - *homoiothe*, in the aorist passive tense; literally means "has become like"; this is significant because it indicates a change in the kingdom program, as a result of Israel's

rejection of Jesus as Messiah

25 But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed **weeds** among the wheat, and left.

25 But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away.

25 While people were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

- The Sower is not necessarily asleep (the Lord never sleeps)

- "...weeds" - *zizanion*, seed in Palestine today that looks just like wheat while it is growing, but then while it matures it turns black (it shows its true color). Because if it gets mixed up in the wheat and you bake bread with it, it is poisonous! Must separate it out.

- The farmer's enemy maliciously sowed the weeds ("tares")

- The tares were likely "bearded darnel" (*lolium temulentum*), a plant that looks very much like wheat when the plants are young.

- The roots of the tares would intermingle with the roots of the wheat, but when the plants reached maturity, it was obvious which was the tares and which were the wheat.

26 And when the wheat sprouted and produced grain, then the weeds also became evident.

26 But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also.

26 When the crop came up and bore grain, the weeds appeared, too.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 And the slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?'

27 The slaves of the landowner came and said to him, 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?'

27 "The owner's servants came and asked him, 'Master, you sowed good seed in your field, didn't you? Then where did these weeds come from?'

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

28 And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves *said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'

28 And he said to them, 'An enemy has done this!' The slaves *said to him, 'Do you want us, then, to go and gather them up?'

28 "He told them, 'An enemy did this!'

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them out?'

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

- The farmer recognized that "an enemy" was responsible for the tares, but instructed his servants to allow them to grow among the wheat until the harvest. At that point, He would separate them.

29 But he *said, 'No; while you are gathering up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them.

29 But he *said, 'No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them.

29 "He said, 'No! If you pull out the weeds, you might pull out the wheat with them.

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

- The servant wanted to uproot the Tares, but was specifically told to not uproot them because by doing so, it would inadvertently uproot some of the Wheat

30 Allow both to grow together until the **harvest**; and at the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the weeds and **bind them in bundles** to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.""

30 Allow both to grow together until the harvest; and in the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers, "First gather up the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them up; but gather the wheat into my barn.""

30 Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, "Gather the weeds first and tie them in bundles for burning, but bring the wheat into my barn.""

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

- "...harvest" - both Tares and Wheat co-exist until the end of the age, when God will separate them. This happens in the Sheep & Goat Judgment in Matt 25:31-46.

— Jesus previously used the OT figure of harvest to refer to judgment (9:37-38)

- "...bind them in bundles" - the tares are so numerous that they have to be "bound" by the Lord when He inaugurates the kingdom. This is talking about the progress of evil within Christendom gaining the upper hand.

— There is no hint that the tares would gradually die out or decrease in numbers

— The Lord is giving the disciples a realistic picture of the interim age. God is at work because we have wheat as well as tares, not just tares.

— Once you see this, you begin to understand what Paul states in his final letter, 2 Timothy, where he talks about evil men and imposters waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. Paul never said that in the last days, a great revival will come along and many people will be saved. He said in the past days, "perilous" times will come. And he begins to tell Timothy that all men who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

Theme: In the present age, it will be difficult to distinguish between the saved and unsaved within professing Christendom. Basically, not everyone who goes to church is a Christian. This parable teaches that a false counter-sowing will imitate the true sowing of the first parable. The wheat and tares will grow together, and only the judgment at the end of the age will separate the two, bringing the good into the Messianic Kingdom and excluding the bad. Take Jesus' disciples...even Judas, who was not saved, was part of His disciples. In fact, Judas fit in so well with the rest of the disciples that when Jesus predicted that one of His disciples would betray Him, they didn't all suspect Judas. In fact, they asked, "Is it me?"

Jesus interpreted this parable for His disciples in v36-43.

The new truth about the present age revealed in this parable is that good and evil people will co-exist in it (i.e. Judas Iscariot among Jesus' disciples). In contrast, the OT prophets said that in the messianic kingdom, righteousness will prevail and God will judge sin swiftly (Cf. Is 11:1-5; 16:5; 32:1; 54:14; 60:17-18; Jer 33:14-15).

(e) Parable of the mustard seed (13:31-32) (Cf. Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19)

31 He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a person took and sowed in his field;

31 He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field;

31 He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom from heaven is like a mustard seed that a man took and planted in his field.

31 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

32 and this is smaller than all the *other* seeds, but when it is *fully* grown, it is larger than the garden plants and **becomes a tree**, so that **THE BIRDS OF THE SKY** come and **NEST IN ITS BRANCHES."**

32 and this is smaller than all *other* seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

32 Although it is the smallest of all seeds, when it is fully grown it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, and the birds in the sky come and nest in its branches."

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

- "...becomes a tree" - an herb or a garden plant never naturally becomes a tree because the two are different species; mustard seeds grow into bushes about 3 feet tall

— What distinguishes an herb from a tree is that their stems never develop woody tissue, but live only long enough for the development of flowers and seeds

— Gen 1 tells us that each produce after its own kind, thus you can't *naturally* have an herb becoming a tree; it developed into something entirely foreign to its very nature and constitution.

— So Christianity is starting off small, but eventually morphs into a different species that does not have any relationship to its humble origins

- "...THE BIRDS OF THE SKY" - *peteinon*, the same birds that picked up the seed in the Sower—the ministers of Satan!

— Several OT passages use a tree with birds flocking to its branches to illustrate a kingdom that people perceive as great (Judges 9:15; Ps 104:12-13; Ezek 17:22-24; 31:3-14; Dan 4:7-23)

- "...NEST IN ITS BRANCHES" - Satan's strategy to counter the Church first from without (Sower), the birds catching away the seed; in the Wheat/Tares, his activities were from within—he sowed his tares among the wheat.

— In this parable, we see the effects of this: Satan now moved worldly men to seek membership in the churches of God. These soon caused the truth to be watered down, discipline to be relaxed, that which repelled the world to be relegated to the background, and what would appeal to the carnal to be made prominent.

— Parables 1-3 are a sad forecast of the development of evil: first, Satan caught away some of the good seed; second, he is engaged in the work of imitation; third, a corrupted Christianity is affording him shelter.

— If Satan can't persecute the Church out of existence, he'll apply for membership. "If you can't beat them, join them."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed must be understood in harmony with the first two parables. We cannot interpret the Mustard Seed inconsistently with the Sower or Wheat and Tares.

In the Parable of the Sower, we learn that the seed (gospel) is only fruitful in one type of soil (out of four). In the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, we learn that the tares (unbelievers) will grow until the point that at the end of the age, they are so numerous that they have to be bundled up.

Theme: Christendom will experience great numerical and geographical expansion from a humble beginning, and yet will ultimately represent an apostate form much different from its pure origins.

Both the Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Parable of the Leaven deal with the growth of the present form of the kingdom. There is a lot of confusion about the interpretation of both parables: many believe the Mustard Seed states that Christianity is going to start small, but eventually grow to cover the entire earth...but there is more to it than that. The Church would and did experience great numerical and geographical expansion from a small beginning (12 disciples and 120 total in the Upper Room). It would go on to have abnormal external growth until it becomes a monstrosity which in turn becomes a resting place for birds. According to the first parable, birds represent agents of Satan. Within the Church, this negative element includes all types of groups, such as those who use Christ's name but deny His deity.

(f) Parable of the leaven (13:33) (Cf. Luke 13:20-21)

[The Coming Kingdom 19 An Interim Age: Mustard Seed; Leaven \(Matt 13:31-33\)](#)

33 He spoke another parable to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like **leaven**, which a **woman** took and hid in **three sata** of flour until it was all leavened."

33 He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom from heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

33 Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

- "...leaven" - *zyme*, in Jewish terms is a symbol of sin; everywhere leaven is portrayed in Scripture, it is a symbol for sin

— In the OT, leaven is always used to represent evil (Gen 19:3; Ex 12; 34:25; Lev 2:11)

— In the Gospels, leaven is used by Christ of the externalism of the Pharisees, the unbelief of the Sadducees, of the worldliness of the Herodians, and in general of evil doctrine (Matt 16:6-12; Mark 8:14-21; Luke 12:1)

— In Paul's epistles, leaven represents evil (1 Cor 5:6-8; Gal 5:7-10)

- As leaven goes through dough, it puffs up. Is that what the Gospel does to people? No, quite the opposite. It's instead one of the most humbling experiences because you come to

the understanding that you can't do anything to change God's view of you, and you can do nothing to provide for your salvation.

— Salvation is essentially reaching out for a life preserver, which requires humility, because you have to recognize you're drowning

- "...woman" - the popular interpretation of this parable represents the woman as the Church

— If that is the case, the person who puts the leaven in the dough is a woman, would be extremely strange to include in Matthew's Gospel, which was written to Jewish believers.

— Women are obviously integral to the Church and the spread of the Gospel. They financially supported Christ's ministry. But for Jesus to make the primary preacher of the Gospel a female would be unheard of.

- "...hid" - the verb here ("to hide") is very unusual if leaven represents the Gospel; we don't hide the Gospel, we share it

— Matt 10:27: Jesus instructed the Gospel to go out openly, in public, not privately

— What is being hidden is not the Gospel, it's false doctrine, which Jesus predicts will permeate Christendom as it grows

— 2 Cor 4:2: Paul never hid anything with the Gospel...it's an open proclamation

- "...three sata" - three measures; to an Arab or a Jew, this historically suggests the Oaks at Mamre (Gen 18—from that time on, three measures of meal are the fellowship offering)

— It was wrong to hide leaven in the measures of meal!

— Leaven will be introduced and it will grow and contaminate

- "...flour" - if leaven (the gospel) is working its way through the meal (the world), then the meal must be bad. It must be bad because it needs to be affected by what is good.

— But if you study the concept of meal throughout Scripture, you'll find it doesn't represent something bad/negative, it represents something good/positive. Many people have the interpretation of this parable backward...

— Gen 18:6: Sarah prepared 3 measures of meal for the 3 angels

— 1 Kings 17:14-16: God prepared Elijah a meal (would that be negative?)

— John 12:24: Jesus analogizes Himself to a "meal"

— So what people do is coming to Matt 13 and interpreting the parables based upon their preconceived theological beliefs rather than checking the rest of Scripture on how this imagery is used.

- "...until it was all leavened" - if you interpret leaven as something good/positive, this parable teaches that everywhere it (the Gospel) goes, there is a positive reaction. Is that true of the Gospel? Does everywhere the Gospel goes, does it have a positive result?

— Many people have heard the Gospel over and over again, yet have not come to faith in Christ. The Gospel, by our own experience, is not some type of magic force that everyone it comes in contact with comes to faith in Christ. God does not shove His relationship with

people down their throats if they don't want it...God respects human volition. It's part of our status as His image bearers. So leaven is a very strange image for the Gospel.

— Remember, the Gospel is only received/welcome by one in four soils

The popular interpretation of this parable is that the leaven represents the Gospel and its power. This interpretation falsely teaches that while leaven is everywhere else used negatively, here it is used positively. The logic goes that when the gospel is faithfully reflected in the lives of believers, its influence in the world is pervasive and positive. The life of Christ within believers is spiritual and moral, leavening the world.

However, the popular interpretation is contradicted by the plain facts of history, and present-day experience: the Gospel has now been preached for 2000 years, yet not a single nation or state, not even a city, town, or village, has been completely evangelized, let alone won to Christ. If the popular view is correct, the Gospel has been a colossal and tragic failure. You rarely have a situation where the Gospel goes into an entire family without some dissension.

Because we must interpret each parable in light of the others parables, and since the first three parables (Sower, Wheat/Tares, Mustard Seed) all do not teach world conversion, we cannot interpret this parable as teaching world conversion either.

Theme: Christendom will experience ever-increasing internal corruption throughout the age.

This parable teaches that the Church will be marked by inward doctrinal corruption. Often, a woman symbolizes a false religious system resulting in spiritual fornication (Rev 2:20; 17:1-18). Whenever leaven is used symbolically, it always represents sin (1 Cor 5:6-8) and frequently the specific sin of false doctrine (Matt 16:6,11-12).

(g) Christ's parabolic instruction as the fulfillment of prophecy (13:34-35) (Cf. Mark 4:33-34)

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

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

34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables. He did not tell them anything without using a parable.

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

- Jesus deliberately adopted teaching in parables after Israel's formal rejection (Matt 12) in order to withhold further truth about Himself and the kingdom from the crowds, who had proved themselves to be deaf to His claims and unresponsive to His demands.

- These parables contain truths that are hidden from the OT (otherwise they would not have been “kept hidden from the foundation of the world”)
- 7x: here; Matt 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb 4:3; 9:26; Rev 13:8; 17:8
- These things that the Lord is talking about in Matt 13 are first-time occasions, not found overtly in other OT books.

35 *This was* so that what was spoken through the prophet would be fulfilled: “I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I WILL PROCLAIM THINGS **HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.**”

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.”

35 This was to fulfill what was declared by the prophet when he said, “I will open my mouth to speak in parables. I will declare what has been hidden since the creation of the world.”

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

- “...HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD” - what is the secret? Certainly not the kingdom, as that is throughout the OT

— Specifically, it is what the kingdom heirs (“sons of the kingdom,” *aka* believers) will experience before the kingdom arrives

— If you’re a believer in Jesus Christ, you’ve trusted in Him for your salvation, you are a citizen (heir, son) of the kingdom. The new truth in Matt 13 is that there is going to be some difficulty before that event happens (Cf. Acts 14:22).

- Matthew claimed that this portion of Jesus’ ministry fulfilled Asaph’s statement in Ps 78:2:

— Asaph wrote that he would explain to readers aspects of Israel’s history that had been previously unknown. He then proceeded to use Israel’s history to teach the Israelites how consistently rebellious they had been toward God, and how just and merciful God had been to them.

— He taught these lessons using parables, by comparing various things. By comparing various incidents in Israel’s history, he revealed things previously unclear. Stephen used the same technique in Acts 7.

Why Does Jesus Divide the Parables Into Two Parts?

We don’t know because He doesn’t tell us, but conjecture is that once Jesus finished the first four parables, the disciples were completely dejected. In these parables, it is clear that

the kingdom is not coming immediately. Not only is that clear, but it's also clear that the age that is coming is a terrible age of deceit and apostasy, and drifting away from truth. If you were a Jew following Christ and you hear this teaching, and you expected the kingdom to come any time (Luke 19:11), you'd be depressed too. So, Jesus gathers them in private to give them four additional parables that indicate that, although Satan is prevailing in the first four parables and many are drifting away, Jesus comforts them in the last four so they know that God is still active and at work during this time. Satan is working, but God is also working. God is sowing, Satan is doing his counterfeit sowing. So if in this age, good and evil are working side by side, can this age be the kingdom? No, because in the kingdom, Satan is bound...there is no competition between Satan and God. Parables 1-4 are the work of the devil; Parables 5-8 are the work of God. But while the present age is not the kingdom, God is doing something significant with two separate peoples of God...first Israel, the Hidden Treasure, and then the Church, the Pearl of Great Price.

(B) Parables given while inside the house (13:36-52)

(a) Interpretation of the parable of the wheat and tares (13:36-43)

[The Coming Kingdom 18 An Interim Age: Wheat & Tares \(Matt 13:24-30,36-43\).](#)

36 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field."

36 Then He left the crowds and went into the house. And His disciples came to Him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the tares of the field."

36 Then Jesus left the crowds and went into the house. His disciples came to him and asked, "Explain to us the parable about the weeds in the field."

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field.

- After giving the first four parables to a large crowd who had gathered, Jesus now moved into the house, with only His disciples, to give them some additional revelation

— In the house, He explained three of the parables (v10-23,37-43,49-50), and taught His disciples four more (v44-48, v52)

37 And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,

37 And He said, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man,

37 He answered, "The person who sowed good seed is the Son of Man,

37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

- Jesus identifies Himself as the Sower

38 and the **field is the world**; and *as for* the good seed, these are the **sons of the kingdom**; and the weeds are the **sons of the evil one**;

38 and the field is the world; and *as for* the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil one;

38 while the field is the world. The good seed are those who belong to the kingdom, while the weeds are those who belong to the evil one.

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

- "...field is the world" - where the seed is sown; notice that the field is not the Church

- This is an important distinction, which was not the interpretation of all early church scholars, or even some of the Reformers. The kingdom predicted in the OT is distinctly different from the Church

- "...sons of the kingdom" - these are the "wheat," those who accept the word and understand it; those destined for the kingdom, but not presently in the kingdom

- A "son" is an heir (Gal 4:7); an heir is someone who is entitled to an inheritance

- Believers are "sons," not in the sense that the kingdom is present, but in the sense that as believers they will inherit the kingdom in the future

- Compare with 8:12, where the sons of the kingdom are Jewish unbelievers, namely Jews who should have been destined for the kingdom but were unbelievers

- If the kingdom were a current spiritual reality, God's people could not be sons of the kingdom or kingdom heirs, because they can't be heirs to something they already possess

- The NT consistently portrays the Church as an heir of the Kingdom as opposed to a ruler in the present existing kingdom (Acts 14:22; 2 Thess 1:5; 2 Tim 4:18; James 2:5; 2 Peter 2:11)

- When people say that this seed that is being sown is the kingdom entering people, you know right then that the statement cannot be accurate because the kingdom never enters people. It's the other way around: it's always portrayed that people enter the kingdom. The Bible NEVER portrays the kingdom entering people (25:34; John 3:5).

- "...sons of the evil one" - the tares; unbelievers

- Notice that God has sons and Satan has sons. Believers are God's sons, heirs of the kingdom; unbelievers are sons of the evil one.

- The point of this parable is that unbelievers can often look a lot like believers, very moral people, but they are actually sons of the devil

- Jesus called the Pharisees "sons of the devil" (John 8:44); they were the most righteous men in Israel, but Jesus called them the progeny of Satan

- Satan is obviously active in this parable (v25,28,38-39), so this shows that this parable cannot be referring to the kingdom (Rev 20:1-3), when Satan will be bound and incarcerated.

39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the **end of the age**; and **the reapers are angels**.

39 and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels.

39 The enemy who sowed them is the Devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are the angels.

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

- This parable shows that Satan is active in the present age, just as he was in the Parable of the Sower

- "...end of the age" - the "Age of Man"; the end of the Tribulation, the Second Coming; found 6x (v39,40,47; 24:3; 28:20; Heb 9:26)

- "...the reapers are angels" - see 24:30-31; 25:31; Cf. 18:10; Luke 15:7; Heb 1:14; 1 Peter 1:12

40 So just as the weeds are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

40 So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age.

40 Just as weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so it will be at end of the age.

40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

41 The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness,

41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom everything that causes others to sin and those who practice lawlessness

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

42 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

42 and they will throw them into a blazing furnace. In that place there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 **Then** THE RIGHTEOUS WILL SHINE FORTH LIKE THE SUN in the kingdom of their Father. The one who has ears, let him hear.

43 Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.

43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's kingdom. Let the person who has ears listen!"

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

- "Then" - denotes a timeframe, at the end of the age, after the wheat and tares are separated

— After this age runs its course, *then* the righteous will shine forth

— A Christian in this age is under oppression until the kingdom is inaugurated

(b) Parable of the earthen treasure (13:44)

The Coming Kingdom 20 An Interim Age: Earthen Treasure; Pearl of Great Price (Matt 13:44-46).

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a **treasure** hidden in the **field**, which a **man found** and **hid again**; and from joy *over it* he goes and sells everything that he has, and **buys that field**.

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

44 "The kingdom from heaven is like treasure hidden in a field that a man found and hid. In his excitement he went and sold everything he had and bought that field."

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

- The common interpretation is that this parable teaches personal salvation...you find the treasure (gospel) in the field, they sell everything and give it all up for the gospel and get saved.

— If this parable represents the Gospel going forth and people getting saved, why would Jesus give it in private? Isn't the Gospel supposed to be publicly proclaimed?

— How is the Gospel hidden in the world? This seems very strange also...I thought the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation, for all who believe? God has made the Gospel clear from the foundation of the earth. Abraham knew the Gospel (Gal 3:8).

— And why would you hide the Gospel after receiving it? If this parable is about a guy finding the Gospel and getting saved, why is he hiding it again? It says the man “found” the hidden treasure (which they say is the Gospel), then he went on and “hid it again”? If the hidden treasure = the Gospel, why would he hide it again?

— The common interpretation also teaches a works Gospel, but don’t we receive the gospel as a free gift of grace, from God? Here, the man “found” the gospel, hid it again, then went and sold all he had...but that’s not how you get saved, by selling all your belongings. Salvation is not based on what we do...it’s based on what Jesus did for us. Not on man’s work, but on Christ’s work. The story of the Bible is not what man does to get to God (that’s religion), it’s what God has done to get to man.

— After the man hides the treasure again, he buys the field. If the common interpretation is true, this doesn’t make any sense...when do sinners ever purchase the world? I thought the world belonged to Satan?

- “...treasure” - Israel, not the Church; throughout the OT, Israel is often referred to as a special treasure of God (Ex 19:5; Deut 14:2; 32:8; Ps 135:4). The Church is never called God’s special treasure.

— The “hidden” treasure refers to Israel’s apostasy in the OT, up until the time of Christ. At the man’s first coming, the treasure is hidden. Israel mistreated the OT prophets, then rejected their own Messiah.

- “...field” - the field is the world (v38); we must interpret these parables consistently; you can’t have a metaphor in one parable mean something completely different in another parable

- “...man” - Jesus Christ, not a sinner (v24,37)

— The common interpretation argues the man is a sinner who is getting saved. The problem is that in these parables, the man is never someone getting saved...it represents Jesus.

— In the Wheat & Tares, the “man” sowed good seed; the one who sowed good seed = Son of Man (v37)

- “...found” - finding the treasure refers to the Offer of the Kingdom to Israel

- “...hid *again*” - refers to Israel’s rejection of the Offer of the Kingdom (Matt 12:24) and subsequent discipline (Deut 28:15-68)

- “...buys the field” - the purchase of the field refers to Jesus’ death for Israel (2 Peter 2:1)

— The man (Jesus) sold all He had and purchased the field

— The rejection of the kingdom offer is ratified by the crucifixion

— Because God takes lemons and makes lemonade, He used this horrible circumstance to pay the sin debt for the entire world, including Israel

— Through the purchase of the field (the crucifixion), Jesus is paying the sin debt for Israel...He’s essentially “purchasing” them (hidden treasure), along with the whole world

- Israel is not necessarily saved, but “savable,” meaning their sins have been purchased if they trust in their Messiah
- The fact that the man will come back to the field again is not explicit in the parable, but is implied. He will come back and get the treasure that he found and hid again. It is the logical completion of the parable that the man would return to retrieve the treasure he purchased.
- Why wouldn’t a second coming be stated explicitly in this parable? Because that detail is out of scope for Jesus’ teaching here. Jesus is teaching about Church Age truths, but the regeneration of Israel happens after this dispensation is ended and the new age (messianic kingdom) is inaugurated.
- In addition, here Jesus is disclosing “mystery” truths, those which are not found anywhere in the OT. The regeneration of Israel is found throughout the OT (Cf. Amos 9:14-15; see Tag: Regeneration of Israel)
- In this age, Israel is “buried” (but not forgotten); not unloved, but buried; her sins are paid for, but still buried in unbelief.

Theme/Proper Interpretation: Israel will remain in unbelief only to be converted at the conclusion of the age.

(c) Parable of the pearl of great price (13:45-46)

[The Coming Kingdom 20 An Interim Age: Earthen Treasure; Pearl of Great Price \(Matt 13:44-46\)](#)

- 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a **merchant** seeking fine pearls,
- 45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,
- 45 “Again, the kingdom from heaven is like a merchant searching for fine pearls.
- 45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:
- “...merchant” - the “man” throughout these parables is Jesus (v24,37,44)
- 46 and upon finding **one pearl of great value**, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it.
- 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.
- 46 When he found a very valuable pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it.”
- 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.
- The common interpretation of this parable is that Christianity is likened to one who earnestly desired and diligently sought salvation. Ultimately his efforts were rewarded by

find Christ, the Pearl of Great Price. After finding Him, the sinner sold all that he had, abandoned his will, and dedicated his life to God, securing his salvation.

— If the common interpretation is true, doesn't this parable teach works salvation? Selling all you have to "buy" Christ (the Pearl) is works salvation. Receiving salvation is not based on what I've done, but what He has done.

— If the man is the sinner and the pearl is Jesus, then man is seeking God? Man never seeks God anywhere in Scripture (Gen 3:8-10; Joshua 24:2-3; Luke 19:10; John 3:19-21; 16:7-11; 12:32; Rom 3:11)

- "...one pearl of great value" - represents Gentiles

— Jesus went to the Cross to pay the sin debt for both Jews and Gentiles. We don't purchase Him, He purchased us.

— Oysters are *not* kosher, a Jew can only eat seafood with scales. This means that pearls were not prized by the Jewish community.

— While they might trade in them because they would sell them to the Gentiles, pearls are a distinctly Gentile ornament, not a Jewish ornament

— Of all jewels, the pearl is the only one that is made by a living organism as a response to an irritation that has been introduced. It is then removed from its place of growth to become an item of adornment.

Theme: In the present age, the Lord will gain a treasure from among the Gentiles during this age of apostasy and deception. We (Gentiles) are the Pearl of Great Price.

Summary of the Earthen Treasure and The Pearl of Great Price (Matt 13:44-46)

1. Jesus' death will redeem many Jews & Gentiles
 - The Jews will not receive the gift until the end of the age
 - The primary group that will receive this gift in this age are Gentiles
2. How Jesus values us rather than how we value Jesus
 - This parable does not describe how much we value God, because we don't really value God...He values us much more than we value Him
3. What God does for man rather than what man does for God
 - If you learn one thing as a Christian, learn this: The story of the Bible is not what man has done/does/will do for God, but what God has done for man.
 - Every other religious system is focused on a process; the story of the Bible is focusing on a Person: Jesus Christ
4. Comfort to disciples imminently expecting the kingdom
 - These two parables would've comforted the disciples, after hearing the first 4 parables

- Jesus encourages them privately by saying that although the coming age is one of evil and deception, God is still working
5. Despite apostasy, God is still at work in this age:
- Among the Jews - Parable of the Earthen Treasure (13:44)
 - Among the Gentiles - Parable of the Pearl of Great Price (13:45-46)

(d) Parable of the dragnet of fish (13:47-50)

The Coming Kingdom 21. An Interim Age: Dragnet; Householder (Matt 13:47-52).

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered *fish* of every kind;

47 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering *fish* of every kind;

47 "Again, the kingdom from heaven is like a large net thrown into the sea that gathered all kinds of fish.

47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

- The net gathers every type of fish, bad fishes as well as good ones. This is no reflection on the skill of the fishermen, however they were responsible to distinguish between the good and bad fish after they had entered the net, and were responsible to separate one from the other.

48 and when it was filled, they pulled it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good *fish* into containers, but the bad they threw away.

48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good *fish* into containers, but the bad they threw away.

48 When it was full, the fishermen hauled it ashore. Then they sat down, sorted the good fish into containers, and threw the bad ones away.

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

- The separation of the good fish from the bad fish doesn't happen until after the fishing is done

— We should not expect perfect righteousness in this age. We can call for it, pray for it, hope for it, but it's not going to happen until Jesus' return to rule and reign.

— The separation that Christians so eagerly desire will not happen until Jesus comes back to earth

Dragnet: Explained

49 So it will be at the end of the age: the angels will come forth and remove the wicked from among the righteous,

49 So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous,

49 That is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will go out, cull out the evil people from among the righteous ones,

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

- This parable does not teach that the entire world will be won to Christ, but believers and unbelievers will be living together side by side, just like you have good fish and bad fish together in the same net.

— At the same time, there will be many salvations. While God is at work, Satan is also at work. In v39 (Wheat & Tares) it describes that the enemy is the devil, the harvest is the end of the age, and the angels are the reapers. So it's a time period where God is at work saving many people, but Satan is at work as well. This won't change until the Second Coming.

50 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

50 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

50 and will throw them into a blazing furnace. In that place there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

- Some believe this parable teaches about the Rapture (most who actually believe in the Rapture place it at the end of the Tribulation period). However, this parable explains just the opposite of what the Rapture is:

- In the Rapture, believers are taken into heaven; in these verses, unbelievers are taken into judgment
- Matt 24:36-39 provides the same example, using the Flood of Noah as an example
- Those who were "taken in judgment" (v39) were the ones who were not in Noah's Ark
- Those "left behind" in the Flood, those who were in Noah's Ark, were saved

Theme: In the Interim Age, the righteous and the wicked will co-exist, grow up side-by-side, only to be separated at the conclusion of the age. Similar to the Parable of the Wheat & Tares.

Summary of Wheat & Tares and Dragnet Parables

Summary: it will be difficult to distinguish between good and evil within professing Christendom

- There are a lot of people who speak Christian-ese, carry their Bibles, and do good works, go to church, but have never trusted in Christ...they are not saved.
- Good example is Judas...Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper that one of them would betray Him. Everyone didn't point the finger at Judas as if it was obvious...they all thought it might of been themselves
- Even though Judas wasn't saved, and was called a child of the devil. Jesus said it would've been better if Judas wasn't born. Jesus called him a "son of destruction" (John 17:12)...that title only used of two people in Scripture...Judas and the Antichrist (man of lawlessness, 2 Thess 2:3).
- Judas was just as unsaved as the Antichrist
- In John 13:27...the devil entered Judas, yet he looked very pious and spiritual
- Judas is a great example of what Jesus is communicating to the disciples in the Parable of the Wheat & Tares and Parable of the Dragnet
- This is obviously an important subject to Jesus because He starts and ends His sermon by giving two parables/examples communicating the same point

(e) Parable of the householder (13:51-52)

The Coming Kingdom 21 An Interim Age: Dragnet; Householder (Matt 13:47-52).

51 "Have you understood all these things?" They *said to Him, "Yes."

51 "Have you understood all these things?" They *said to Him, "Yes."

51 "Do you understand all these things?"

They told him, "Yes."

51 Jesus saith unto them, **Have ye understood all these things?** They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a **disciple of the kingdom** of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure **new** things and **old**."

52 And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

52 Then he told them, "That is why every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom from heaven is like the master of a household who brings both new and old things out of his treasure chest."

52 Then said he unto them, *Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.*

- "...disciple of the kingdom" - to be a disciple of the kingdom, one needs to understand both old revelation (treasure), which is the OT, and new revelation (treasure), which is the NT, specifically the Matt 13 parables.

- We shouldn't just try to understand what the kingdom will be like one day (OT), but we also need to go a step further and understand, not the kingdom's establishment on earth (we have that from the OT), but understand how the experience of the sons/heirs of the kingdom before it comes.

- "...new [treasure]" - NT revelation about the kingdom, specifically everything Jesus has revealed in Matt 13

- Matt 13 primarily points out what the sons/heirs of the kingdom will experience before the kingdom is manifested

- Many Christians today are fragmented in their understanding of God's overall program because they've given themselves to one part of the Bible, not studying or considering the whole counsel of God. They don't look at the Bible holistically, in its completion.

- "...old [treasure]" - OT revelation about the kingdom

- If you want to understand the kingdom, or the conditions on the earth before the inauguration of the kingdom on the earth, you can't just read the OT.

- If you only read the OT to obtain information about the kingdom, or the events leading up to it, your information will be partial, incomplete, because the OT doesn't say anything about what the "heirs of the kingdom" (or "sons of the kingdom") will experience up until the kingdom is established.

- So it's important that we understand the kingdom and it's conditions, but it's also important that we understand what the believers, sons of the kingdom, heirs of the kingdom will experience before the kingdom actually comes. To do this, you have to read both the OT and the NT, particularly Matt 13.

- This is the problem with "experts": they know more and more and more about less and less and less. "Generalists" on the other hand know less and less and less about more and more and more.

- One can't understand the NT without an understanding of the OT, and one can't understand the OT without an understanding of the NT. So it's best to be a "generalist" in the whole counsel of God rather than an expert in any one area.

Theme: These NT truths must be considered alongside OT revelation to comprehend the totality of God's kingdom agenda.

The Parable of the Householder depicts a man bringing both old and new treasures from his house, and teaches us that these previous 7 parables, describing fresh and new truths about the course of the Church Age, must be considered alongside what prior revelation teaches about the future kingdom in order to understand God's total program.

Summation of the Matthew 13 Parables

1. The current age is not the kingdom age
 - Peace is not breaking out; Satan is not bound, rather we are to "put on the full armor of God"; no kingdom conditions present
2. The current age is an age of counterfeit sowing and satanic activity (13:39)
 - Satan is at work deceiving believers and unbelievers alike
3. Outside hindrances (13:20-22)
 - Hindrances and distractions, often satanically inspired, hinder the penetration of the Gospel into our hearts
 - Rocky soil - hears and receives with joy, but no root; when affliction/persecution arise, he falls away (outer pressure on the kingdom heir)
 - Thorns - hears, but worries of the world and deceitfulness of wealth choke the word (again describes outer pressure)
4. Hardness to the Gospel (13:23)
 - Throughout this age, there will be a general "hardness" to the Gospel
 - You ever talk to someone about the Gospel and it's almost as if they are deaf...they can't understand what you are saying?
 - We are surprised by that, but Jesus teaches us in the Sower that only 1 in 4 soils is fruitful
 - Even believers' lives many times are so unconsecrated to God...not reading the Bible, not in regular prayer, forsaking fellowship together with believers...that the spiritual fruit that God wants to bring forth in their lives is short-circuited
 - There are a number of people who are saved and going to heaven, but who are not bearing the fruit in this life because of these outer distractions, the affairs of this life, which interrupt or preempt our focus
5. Co-existence of good and evil
 - Wheat & Tares; Dragnet
6. God's program becomes worldly (13:32)
 - God's program starts pure, but as Christianity spreads throughout the earth, it will become worldly (Mustard Seed)
7. Internal corruption (13:33)
8. God is at work (13:23-24,44-46)

- The good news...at least on one soil, there is fruit; you have Wheat (sown by Jesus) as well as Tares
 - He is gaining a treasure from among the Gentiles (Pearl of Great Price)
9. Israel is hidden (13:44; 23:39)
- Israel will remain in unbelief until the end of the Tribulation
 - It will take the monumental events of the Tribulation to shake Israel of her false security so she will trust in her Messiah
 - If Israel is in unbelief, and the manifestation of the kingdom is connected to the obedience of Israel, can the kingdom be present today? No.

Matt 13:54—16:12 records the course of Jesus' ministry after Israel's rejection. Opposition from several areas led Him to withdraw to safer places, where He continued to minister to both Jews and Gentiles and prepare His disciples for what lies ahead.

Matt 13:54—19:2 records increasing polarization. Jesus expanded His ministry, but as He did, opposition became more intense and the Jewish leaders became increasingly hostile. Consequently, Jesus spent most of His time preparing His disciples, revealing more of Himself to them, but they only understood some of what He told them

(2) Why the interim program was necessary (Matt 13:53—14:12)

(A) Christ rejected in his hometown (13:53-58) (Cf. Mark 6:1-6a)

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there.

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there.

53 When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

53 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54 And He came to His hometown and *began* teaching them in their synagogue, with the result that they were astonished, and said, "Where *did* this man *acquire* this wisdom and *these* miraculous powers?

54 He came to His hometown and *began* teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where *did* this man *get* this wisdom and *these* miraculous powers?

54 He went to his hometown and began teaching the people in their synagogue in such a way that they were amazed and asked, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miracles?

54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

- Jesus goes to His hometown, Nazareth (Cf. Luke 4:16), and teaches in the synagogue; they are impressed
— Remember His last visit where they wanted to stone Him
— This is Jesus' last visit to Nazareth, and Matthew's last mention of Jesus teaching in a synagogue. From now on, Jesus appears increasingly outside the structures of traditional Judaism.

55 Is this not the carpenter's son? Is His mother not called Mary, and His brothers, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not His mother called Mary, and His brothers, James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

55 This is the builder's son, isn't it? His mother is named Mary, isn't she? His brothers are James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas, aren't they?

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

- Carpenter's son. Note his brethren! Mary did not remain a virgin after Jesus!
— We know that after His resurrection, at least two of his brethren become believers, James and Jude.

56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then *did* this man *acquire* all these things?"

56 And His sisters, are they not all with us? Where then *did* this man *get* all these things?"

56 And his sisters are all with us, aren't they? So where did this man get all these things?"

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

- In one sense, these questions are legitimate. However, they were "offended" (v57) by Him, in the sense that His claim caused them to stumble.

— It was their reaction to His claim, not the claim itself, that stumbled them

57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not dishonored except in his hometown and in his own household."

57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown and in his own household."

57 And they were offended by him.

But Jesus told them, "A prophet is without honor only in his hometown and in his own home."

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

- Usually a person enjoys a better reception at home than anywhere else, except if they have attained an exalted position, in which case the opposite is true

58 And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

58 And He did not do many miracles there because of their unbelief.

58 He did not perform many miracles there because of their unbelief.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

- The Lord can work in His own sovereignty, however He chooses to reward faith.

- Jesus didn't perform miracles for non-believers (Cf. Mark 6:5-6)

— When settled unbelief set in, there was no point in doing miracles

— Even those who knew Jesus best refused to believe on Him