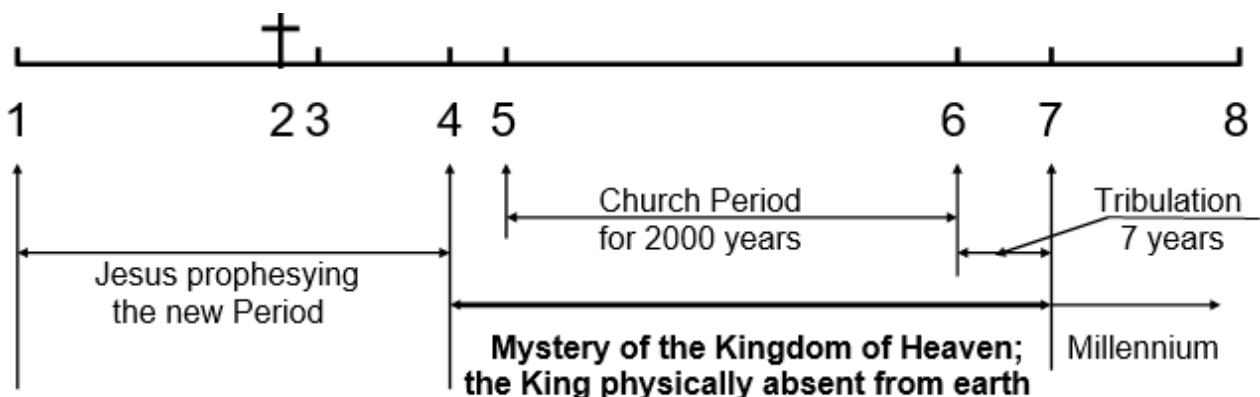


Lesson 57

The Parables of Matthew 13 (continuation)

- We said that Jesus changed his message about offering the Kingdom to the nation of Israel and began prophesying about a period called the Church Age, which is our time. However, we also said that the Church is part of what Jesus called the 'Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.' The Kingdom is eternal; it never ends. The difference is that during this period, the Kingdom will continue without the King physically present on Earth.
- In the eight parables of ⇒ **Matthew 13**, Jesus explains the characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven without the King physically present. Clearly identifying this period of time, from its beginning to its end, will make it easier to understand the Bible from ⇒ **Matthew 13**.



- 1 Matthew 13; Jesus prophesying about this new Period.
- 2 Death of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- 3 Resurrection of Jesus Christ and definitive victory of the Kingdom.
- 4 Ascension of Jesus Christ into heaven, 40 days after the resurrection; beginning of the Mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- 5 Pentecost, the beginning of the Church.
- 6 Rapture of the Church and beginning of the tribulation period.
- 7 End of the tribulation, after 7 years, and 2nd coming of Jesus Christ, now to set up his visible Kingdom; King Jesus physically reigning on earth.
- 7~8 Jesus' millennial rule on this earth, before the final judgment.

1st The Parable of the Sower

⇒ **Matthew 13:1~23**

- This is the introductory parable and the basis for the others. It's the only parable that doesn't begin with the phrase, '*The kingdom of heaven is like...*' Jesus explains the parable, making it clear that the Word of God will be preached during this time, and some will believe while others will not.

- **V.4 and V.19;** Those who hear the Word but do not understand it allow the wicked one to take away what was sown in their hearts. Have you ever preached the Gospel to someone, only to meet them again later and realize that they haven't understood or retained anything? Whenever we preach, we should pray in Jesus' name so that the devil doesn't steal the word planted in their hearts.
- **V.5~6 and V.20~21;** We see people who have received the Gospel and we say of them: '*That one has received it well. She's born again.*' We think she understands everything. She's joined a Christian group and started taking an interest. But then she gradually withers and grows cold. She starts missing meetings and becomes disinterested. She leaves. We thought he/she was born again, but when faced with the slightest persecution or criticism, he/she becomes scandalized and leaves.
- **V.7 and V.22;** The seed falls among thorns for those who leave when they discover the need for commitment.
- **V.8 and V.23;** Those who are truly born again and accept the Word of God will bear fruit. Some will bear more fruit than others. They are called good soil.

2nd The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

⇒ **Matthew 13: 24~30 and 36~43**

- Although this parable also deals with sowing, the focus is different. The true sowing of the first parable is imitated by **FALSE SOWING** here. Although the false and the true grow together, the Lord makes it clear that his justice will be served in the end. The harvest mentioned here refers to the judgment that will be made at the end of the Tribulation, not the Rapture of the Church. Note that at the rapture, the Church will be taken away, leaving evil behind. In this parable, however, the tares are first removed, and then the wheat is gathered into God's barn. Those who are wheat will enter the Millennium. As in the first parable, Jesus said he would explain the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven and show the characteristics that will mark this period. From the first parable, we know that the Word will be preached, and some will believe while others will not for various reasons.

- **V.24:** Now, all parables will begin with the phrase, '*The Kingdom of Heaven is like...*'
- The one who sows the good seed is Jesus. The enemy is the devil. The field is the world. The good seed represents the children of the Kingdom, and the wheat represents those who are saved. The weeds are the children of the wicked one, the unsaved. The harvest refers to the end of this period, which is the end of the tribulation, not the rapture. The reapers are the angels.
- The second characteristic is that the Word would be preached, but many would not believe for various reasons. Among those who did believe, Satan would send his agents to sow. During this period, Satan will place people who resemble wheat among those who believe the Word, but who are actually tares. They will only be separated at the end of the period, which goes beyond the Church.
- **V41~42;** first the tares are removed.
- **V.43:** and the wheat, the righteous, remain.

- See that in the Rapture, it's the opposite: the righteous and saved are taken away, while the unsaved remain. Realize that it's different. Therefore, we conclude that new saved individuals (*wheat*) will be formed during the Tribulation and remain after that period. After the Tribulation, the lost will be thrown into the '*fiery furnace*,' into Hell, where '*there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth*.'

3rd The Parable of the Mustard Seed

⇒ Matthew 13:31~32

- Since the mustard seed produces a bush and Jesus is talking about a tree here, we are dealing with something abnormal – an anomaly. In the first parable, the Lord Jesus says that the birds are the wicked one. We need to distinguish between the true Church – the invisible, universal Church that God sees – and what today is called '*Christendom*' or '*Christianity*.' In today's world, when the word '*Christianity*' is mentioned, it encompasses all the so-called '**CHRISTIAN**' religions: Roman Catholicism, Orthodox Catholicism, Protestantism, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormonism, Adventism, Spiritualism, and so on. Today, Christianity has become a huge tree, but an abnormal one because there is a distortion of the truth within it. All religions are invited to build their '*nests*' in this tree, which is called '**ECUMENISM**.'

Ecumenism is contrary to God and the Word of God. True Christianity is not a union of religions; it is a unified body. True Christianity has never been, nor will it ever be, a union of several things or members. It is an organism, a unity. What does ecumenism propose? Union. Is that possible in light of God's Word? Jesus talks about this union, which will be deformed – a union in which many birds (*the wicked one*) will come to roost.

4th The Parable of the Leaven

⇒ Matthew 13:33

- In the Bible, leaven always represents something bad or contaminating (⇒ Matthew 16:6-12; ⇒ Mark 8:15; ⇒ 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; ⇒ Galatians 5:7-9). In the Bible, **LEAVEN EQUALS SIN** or false doctrine. Leavened dough represents Christianity being corrupted by false doctrines that give rise to false religions. Note that '*until all is leavened*' means the corruption will be total.
- These four parables deal with the total development of Christianity. They describe how that era would be marked, and how man and the world would perceive Christianity. It would be deformed. Jesus describes its characteristics. The Word would be preached, and tares would be planted among the wheat. This would not be approved by God, but the world would look on and say, '*It's Christianity*.' However, false doctrines would be present, and everything would be leavened. True Christians today see the '*leaven*' in everything that calls itself the '*Church*.'

- How many parables had Jesus told so far? Four: the parable of the Sower, the parable of the wheat and the tares, the parable of the mustard seed, and the parable of the leaven. Jesus explained the ones his disciples didn't understand. Then he went into the house and told four more parables. Nothing in the Bible is said by chance. The Holy Spirit is always trying to tell us something. This change shows a division in the parables. The first four parables depict the true characteristics of the prophesied period and how it would appear to the world. In the remaining four parables, Jesus shows how God would perceive that time.

5th The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

⇒ Matthew 13:44

- What is the countryside? It is the world. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a hidden treasure in a field. What is the treasure? Jesus is the man who sells everything; Israel is the treasure hidden in the world.

⇒ Exodus 19:5 and ⇒ Psalms 135:4 are words that God speaks about Israel: 'My peculiar treasure.' So, what does Jesus do for Israel? The parable speaks of a treasure hidden in the world. Where is Israel? Israel is scattered throughout the world. 'Moved with joy and gladness', Jesus sells everything he has. He gives his life. Is there anything more valuable than one's own life? When someone gives their life, what's left? By giving his life and shedding his blood, Jesus bought the whole land for Israel's sake. Look at his attitude – full of 'joy.' What love from our God and our Lord Jesus Christ! Israel is a hidden treasure in the eyes of the world and will only appear at the end of the period ⇒ Psalm 89:20 and 28-37.

6th The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

⇒ Matthew 13:45~46

- Pearls are found in the sea. In the Scriptures, the sea or waters represent nations and peoples (⇒ Revelation 17:1-15). Pearls are the only organic jewels. The Church is an organism being made in this way. The pearl represents the Church, and the Lord Jesus gave his life to purchase it. The more the Church disturbs the world, the more it grows. The same is true for the pearl. A grain of sand enters the oyster and bothers it. The pearl then forms inside the oyster. The more the pearl grows, the more it bothers the oyster until it is expelled. With his blood, Jesus bought Israel and the Church, uniting the two peoples (Jews and Gentiles) into one: the people of God.

7th The Parable of the Dragnet

⇒ Matthew 13:47~51

- This parable clearly explains what will happen at the end of the Tribulation before the Millennial Kingdom of Jesus is established. The angels will separate the wicked from the righteous, after which the wicked '*will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth*' (⇒ Matt. 13:49-50). (V. 51). '*Have you understood all these things?*' When will that be? At the end of the Tribulation.

8th The Parable of Things New and Old

⇒ Matthew 13:52~53

- A scribe is someone who understands. In this period, it refers to anyone who has become a disciple. Jesus is speaking of these people. Jesus said, '*If you understand what the Kingdom of Heaven is, then you also understand that I speak of the old things already prophesied in the Old Testament, but I also introduce new things that have not been prophesied before.*'
- These parables conclude Jesus' second great discourse, which speaks of a new period called the 'Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven.' This is a period of the Kingdom in which the King will be absent. We can summarize this period as follows:
 - 1st. The Word of God will be sown throughout this season.
 - 2nd. This will be imitated by false sowing.
 - 3rd. The kingdom will grow enormously in size.
 - 4th. It will be marked internally by a corrupt doctrine.
 - 5th. Still, the Lord will gain a special treasure for himself.
 - 6th. A people formed from Israel and the Church.
 - 7th. This era will end in judgment. The wicked will be excluded from the kingdom that will be established, while the righteous will be taken to receive its blessings, with the King physically present.
- The sequence of Jesus's speeches is clear: he offered the Kingdom to Israel, they rejected it, and then he began to prophesy a new period. He said, 'I'm not going to set up the Kingdom now. I'm going away, and until I come back, there will be a time like this.' Jesus will return to Earth seven years after the rapture of the Church, at the end of the tribulation. This won't be the end of everything, but rather the end of the period Jesus prophesied: a time beginning with the absence of the King in his Kingdom and ending with the King's return to physically reign on earth. Therefore, the period prophesied by Jesus is the period in which the King will be physically absent from the earth.