

The Prophetic Parables of Matthew 13

Lesson 10 – The Parable of the Master of the House

Matthew 13:51-52

March 23, 2025

Special Introduction

I have rarely referenced H.A. Ironside since I began this series of lessons, but when I consulted his commentary on Matthew, I thought he made a good point when he said this:

“The kingdom promised to Israel by the prophets depended upon the reception of the King by the chosen nation. In rejecting Him, they lost their opportunity, and so the kingdom was taken from them (Matt. 21:43). When they turn to the Lord, He will appear in glory, and all things that are written concerning the kingdom will be fulfilled. In the meantime, as the Word of the kingdom is proclaimed, there will arise a mixed group who profess to own the authority of the Lord Jesus. These constitute the kingdom in mystery. It is a wider sphere than the church, inasmuch as it includes both true and false professors. The separation of the two groups will take place at the end of the age, after which the kingdom of the Son of Man will be established over all the earth.”¹

With this quote, Ironside summarizes what I have been trying to establish regarding the point of the Matthew 13 Kingdom Parables. This interregnum or inter-advent period was a mystery not fleshed out or reported by the OT prophets, who projected the “Kingdom” as a Millennial or Messianic Kingdom, which would be reigned over by Christ, and populated by industrious and holy people. Since it did not start at Christ’s ascension (contrary to what Covenant theologians believe), then it is delayed until the millennium. It will not come until the church age ends, and the “*times of the Gentiles*” has run its course. ①

I am hopeful that we’ve all observed the cohesive nature of these Kingdom Parables of Matthew 13, including another one from Luke 19:11-27 and there are a few more relevant parables from Matthew 21 & 22, if time allows which will pick up on the same theme.

But for now, let’s take a look at Matthew 13:51-52, another short parable – and not always recognized as a Kingdom Parable – making it the 8th Kingdom Parable in Matthew 13. Since it is not often recognized as a Kingdom parable, it was difficult to find a lot of commentary on it.

Verse 51 – Have You Understood All These Things?

This first statement, actually a question that Jesus asks His disciples is pretty basic. Keep in mind that [Mark 4:33-34](#) informs us that Jesus had explained all the

¹ H.A. Ironside, Matthew, Kregel 1920, 2005, pg. 101

parables to them (not just the 2 we that have a record of the explanations for), so at this point, they should have had a fairly good understanding of each one of them. Their answer should have been “yes” and it was. But had they really understood? We are never told what their response was to the 2 Jesus did explain – The Sower and the Wheat and Tares. They did ask Him to explain the Wheat and Tares (13:36). Regarding the Parable of the Sower, the disciples ask in 13:10; “Why do you speak to them in parables?” Christ explained that to them in vv. 11-17.

So what have we seen being revealed from the first Matthew 13 parable till now in the “secrets” or “mysteries” of the Kingdom? These mysteries are things not revealed in the OT (except in cryptic passages perhaps), and not until Jesus shared this information with His chosen followers. We do well to keep this in mind. The Kingdom itself was revealed in scores of OT prophecies, but the interregnum was the mystery, the secret, and the church, where Gentiles are fellow heirs was part of the mystery era also not revealed in the OT – cf. Eph. 3:1-6.

Alva McLean comments:

“At the end of the entire series [of Kingdom parables], when Jesus asked the disciples, “Have ye understood all these things?” they answered, “Yea Lord” (Matt. 13:51). Allowing for some naïve overestimation of their understanding, nevertheless we cannot miss the note of approval in our Lord’s final word in verse 52 concerning the one who has been “instructed” about the Kingdom, and is therefore able to bring forth out of his treasure “things old and new.”

②

The point to be emphasized in all this is that these parables of the Kingdom, even for the saved, must be divinely interpreted in order to serve any beneficial purpose. In no area of God’s Word is there greater need for caution on the part of the interpreters than in the parables, and especially in those concerned with the “mysteries of the Kingdom.”²

Verse 52 – The Parable

Upon their answer to Jesus’ question, “Yes,” he immediately told them this one final parable. We know that it was the final in the series of 8 in Matthew 13 because of what Matthew records in v. 53 – “*And when Jesus had finished these parables, he went away from there...*”

Note the “therefore” in v. 52. It points us to Jesus’ question and their reply. And then Jesus presents this brief parable, not to the crowd, but to the disciples only. It is interesting because of the “therefore” to see Jesus’ point. First, the preliminary or primary responsibility upon hearing the parable(s), if understood by the hearer, is that something must happen and result, because as G. Campbell Morgan says: “Every scribe instructed in the Kingdom of heaven, or made a disciple of the Kingdom of heaven who is listening to the teaching and is instructed, is like a householder.”³

² Alva J. McLean, *The Greatness of the Kingdom*, BMH Books 1968/1980, pg. 324

³ G. Campbell Morgan, *The Parables and Metaphors of Our Lord*, Revell, 1973, pg. 84

Note again, looking at v. 51 (Jesus' question) carefully. Notice "*all those things?*" We need to grasp the significance of all these parables – they are a set – the details, especially those explained by Jesus (in our Bibles) and to His disciples, - are important. All of these merge and interconnect, and all are necessary to unveil the truth of the mysteries of the Kingdom of heaven. IOW, have we understood not just one of them, but all of these details in an interrelationship or cohesive network of facts pointing to one conclusion. Jesus' emphasis with His question is the word, "understood."

So, in the sense how Jesus states things in v. 52, those who understand have been "trained" for the Kingdom. The Scribes (notoriously corrupt in Jesus' day) were to read the law, interpret it and explain it. They were to be moral interpreters. Their corruption turned them into willing allies of the Pharisees and Sadducees and turned them against Christ. Jesus is not using this term or title in this way, but is stating what a legitimate scribe should be doing with God's Word. He is referring to His disciples, His chosen ones to carry His Word, even after He is gone from them. G. Campbell Morgan points out;

"Christ had now been instructing His men, His disciples, those representative men who were to interpret the Kingdom of Heaven to the world, and He named them by that same name; and in so doing, He transferred the fulfilment of an office from men who had failed to men who were to succeed them. In order to achieve the fulfilment of the responsibility, therefore there must be an understanding of the King's teaching concerning the Kingdom in this age.

Once again, go back to these parables. According to Jesus, this age is to be one of conflict from beginning to end, characterized largely by human break-down and failure. But it is to be an age in which God accomplishes definite purpose both in the world and in human history, and in the creation of an instrument for the ages to come. Said Jesus, "Have you understood all these things," "have you grasped My teaching? If you have a sense of what this age is to be like, you are to go out into it as Scribes."⁴ Cf. Matt. 17:17-20 (confirms this).

So, in the language of v. 52, everyone who has been trained for the Kingdom of heaven is like "a master of a house" (ESV) or "householder" (KJV). So now, since this language is a bit foreign to us (especially "householder") we must understand what this means in an eastern culture, so we don't assume of this as a title for a butler. It is much more than that.

The Greek word is *oikodespotes*; i.e.) literally a "house despot". It is a word conveying tremendous authority. It can be a shepherd, father, king – all merged into one personality.⁵ Jesus used this word 10 or 12 times, almost always of Himself. So, in this case, what does the master of the house do? According to v. 52, he "*brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.*" What does this mean? First of all, the householder has vast resources, and it is up to him how he will use those resources. He brings them forth (the Greek means 'bountifully') and scatters them – IOW, he puts them to good use.

⁴ IBID, p. 86

⁵ IBID, 86

Secondly, he calls them, treasures “what is new and what is old.” He doesn’t say “new things and old things,” instead, he appears to be saying things which are new and old. Dwight Pentecost comments,

“In this parable the owner entered his storeroom and brought from there what would meet the needs of the household as he knew them. The truth Christ has been proclaiming is likened to the treasure of the owner of the house. Christ has presented some previously revealed truths that could be called “old”; He has presented other truths not previously revealed, and therefore “new.”⁶

Further into his book, Pentecost adds a bit more detail;

“Jesus likened Himself to the custodian of a warehouse who brings forth the items that will meet the needs of the household. The custodian may bring forth old grain or new grain, or old wine and new wine. But through what he brings forth, he fully meets the needs of the household. Here Christ was revealing that some aspects of the new form of the kingdom would be like previous forms of the kingdom, and some aspects would be entirely new. The fact that there would be a kingdom was clearly revealed in the OT; but an aspect that was new was that it would be proclaimed throughout the world. The kingdom in the OT was for Israel, even though Gentiles would be blessed in the kingdom. However, a new truth was that Jews and Gentiles would participate equally in the new form of the kingdom. Thus, in the new form of the kingdom, we do find some features that are similar to the old, but we also discover other features that are unique to the new.”⁷

Arno Gaebelein puts a different spin on it, and comments in his commentary on Matthew;

④

“The things old are the things revealed in the OT and the new things those of the new dispensation, which are given in these parables in a nutshell.

Upon this declaration there follows a symbolic action of our Lord. “And it came to pass when Jesus had finished these parables, He withdrew thence.” The revealer of the secrets has given His revelation and now He disappears from the scene. It stands in type for His bodily absence from the earth during this age.”⁸

Jim Showers and Chris Katulka add;

“The final parable summarizes the disciples’ responsibility now that they had been blessed with this new revelation. Rather than nullifying the old covenants and promises of the Kingdom, the newly revealed mysteries provided details about their timetable of fulfillment and the interadvent period’s character. The disciples were then charged with dispensing one treasure of truth, the old and new together, to those who await the coming Kingdom.”⁹

⁶ Dwight Pentecost, Thy Kingdom Come, Victor Books, 1990, pg. 225

⁷ IBID, pg. 236-237

⁸ Arno Gaebelein, The Gospel of Matthew, Loizeaux Brothers, 1910/1961, pg. 303

⁹ Jim Showers & Chris Katulka, Editors, Thy Kingdom Come, FOI, 2019, pg. 96

Verses 53-58 – Jesus is Rejected in His Hometown

This passage is not part of this parable. According to v. 53, Jesus had finished the parables, and went away from there. It is a fitting end to this chapter, however, since He began to teach in parables because His people had rejected Him as their King and Messiah, so they had refused the offer of the Kingdom. (cf. John 1:9-14)

He leaves the region He'd been in as He delivered the parables, and heads to His hometown of Nazareth. There, He teaches in their synagogue (v. 54). His wisdom astonishes the people, and they say, "*Where did this man get His wisdom and these mighty works?*" Verses 54-56 list all the common things we they knew about Him, and so they could not figure out between what they had known about His family life as He grew up and what He stands before them as now.

Because of all their thoughts and the clash between that and what they were hearing from His as their teacher, v. 57 tells us "*they took offense at Him.*" This cause Jesus to utter a proverb (v. 57b), and v. 58 tells us, "*He did not do many mighty works there [in Nazareth] because of their unbelief.*" IOW – He did not deem them worthy of seeing and experiencing Him doing His miracles. It wasn't because they wouldn't believe the miracles – it was that they weren't worthy of seeing the miracles. This could be a parallel of Matt. 13:10-16.

Expanded Summary

It is my hope that, having gone through these kingdom parables, that the case has been made that this current age cannot be "the kingdom." ⑤

This last parable, along with the other 7, tell us that these kingdom mysteries must be considered alongside OT Kingdom truth if we are to understand God's Kingdom agenda. The course of this present age involves (and has from the start) the coexistence of evil and good prior to the ultimate establishment of Christ's earthly Kingdom – the one the OT prophets share a lot about.

This expanded summary, as long as I write it properly, and quote the right authors, is intended to cover all 8 of the Kingdom Parables generally, so this summary won't be parable specific (mostly). I read the areas of each reference book and commentary I used to this point to see who dealt with the summing up these parables the best. I settled on Dwight Pentecost a fair bit, with an assist by Michael Vlach. There are a lot of quotes and a number of verses to examine.

The first is from Dwight Pentecost as he sets up for us what he believes is the proper interpretation of these Matthew 13 (and a few others not in Matthew 13) Kingdom parables;

"There are those who believe that this portion of Scripture gives a picture of conditions on the earth in respect to the development of the kingdom program during the time of the King's

absence from the earth. These parables describe the events of the entire inter-advent period. Such is the approach to this passage adopted in this study.”¹⁰

Michael Vlach concurs with this position, and provides a bit more detail; “Matthew 13 reveals important new truths about the kingdom in the aftermath of Israel’s rejection of Jesus. The kingdom will not be established with Jesus’ first coming. There must be an intervening age between His first and second comings and then the kingdom will be established. Yet this period between the two comings is related to the kingdom program. There exists a growing nucleus of people called “sons of the kingdom” who have believed the “word of the kingdom.” But the kingdom itself will not be established until the second coming of Jesus. Later, Matthew 19:28 & 25:31 link Jesus’ kingdom reign with the second coming, the transformation of the earth, and coming judgment. So, even after Matthew 13 the kingdom is still presented as future and earthly by Jesus.

Two extremes must be avoided. First, it is wrong to deny any connection between the kingdom and the present age. The kingdom program is related to the present age I regard to the message of the kingdom and the growth of kingdom citizens. Second, it is incorrect to hold the kingdom of reign itself has been established in this age. That will occur at Jesus’ second coming.”¹¹

You will recall that early on, we discussed Matt. 13:10-17, in which the disciples asked Jesus, “*Why do you speak to them in parables?*” Either the pattern of speaking in parables was new to the disciples because He had not done it before, or if He had only minimally (I don’t believe he did with the possible exception of a couple of places in the Sermon on the Mount). However, the disciples were apparently perplexed because, even as His avid students, they were not understanding the points he was trying to make. Here is Pentecost’s take on it; “The nature of the Lord’s reply in the verses that follow [i.e., Matt. 13:10-17) would indicate that the question ought to be understood, “*Why speakest thou unto them in parables?*” There was nothing new in the use of parables themselves, for the Lord had used such with frequency before, both to instruct and to illustrate the truths He desired to convey. The disciples must have recognized a new emphasis in or Lord’s teaching method. ⑥

In reply to the disciples’ question, the Lord gives three purposes in the use of this parabolic method of instruction, (1) It was a means of substantiating His claim to Messiahship (Matt. 13:34-35). In addition to the other signs to prove His claim there was the sign in relation to Isaiah’s prophecy. (2) It was a method of imparting truth to the believing hearer (Matt. 13: 11). (3) It was a method of hiding truth from the unbelieving hearer (Matt. 13:13-15).”¹²

Matthew’s goal in writing his gospel, his target audience so to speak, was the Jews / Israel. You can see this as Pentecost points out here, showing how these 8 parables follow this theme and react to what has happened in the King’s life; “This thirteenth chapter holds a unique place in the development of the theme of the Gospel. Throughout the book Christ is seen in His presentation as Messiah. In chapters 1 and 2, His

¹⁰ Dwight Pentecost, *Things to Come*, Zondervan, 1964, pg. 139 NOTE- what he calls the inter-advent period is what I’ve called the interregnum

¹¹ Michael Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, Lampion Hose, 2020, pg. 332

¹² OP Cit, Pentecost, pg. 139-140

legal right to the throne is presented; in chapter 3 is depicted the dedication of the King; in chapter 4 the moral right of the King is presented; in 5 through 7 the judicial right of the King is shown; in 8 through 10 is presented the authority of the King; as His prophetic right is demonstrated by His ministry to Israel; and in chapter 11 and 12 we see the opposition to the King. The great question before Israel is this, "Is not this the son of David?" (Matt. 12:23). It is evident that Israel is answering in the negative. Christ shows that both He and His forerunner have been rejected (11:1-9), and this rejection will result in judgment (11:20-24). Because of the ultimate rejection of the cross Christ can give a new invitation (11:28-30), an invitation to all. In chapter 12 the rejection comes to a climax. The populace was debating the person of Christ (12:23). The answer given by the Pharisees was; "This fellow does not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils" (12:24). The Holy Spirit had borne His witnesses to the Person of Christ through His words and His works, and the leaders who examined the evidence have decided that His credentials are the credentials of hell, not those of heaven. The great warning of judicial blindness and judgment is given by the Lord to the nation (12:31- 32). As the chapter closes (12:46-50) the Lord indicates that He is setting aside all natural relationships, such as Israel sustained to Him and to the covenant promises by a physical birth, and established a new relationship, based on faith."¹³ (cf. Romans 16:26 – my margin note).

Graham Scroggie, an interesting expositor with some unique viewpoints, is cited by Pentecost here to go along with the above quote;

"The Gospel of Matthew is the Gospel which presents the Lord Jesus Christ as Jehovah's King and Israel's Messiah. Scroggie says,

"More than any other of the Gospels, Matthew's is allied with the Hebrew Scriptures in theme and tone; their subjects are its subjects, the Messiah, Israel, the Law, the Kingdom, the Prophecy. Jewish ideas and terms characterize the whole record. Its witness would not have impressed either the Romans, for whom Mark wrote, or the Greeks, for whom Luke wrote, but to the Jews, its significance would be inescapable."¹⁴ (7)

We made a point of looking at Matt. 13:11, the initial part of Jesus' reply to His disciples' question. His reply helps us realize that what the Kingdom parables are about is mysteries that (ESV – secrets) have not yet been revealed. Not anticipated by the OT prophets, or the people and certain aspects of it were not even recognized by NT writers until the Holy Spirit revealed it to them as part of the NT enscripturation process.

These secrets or mysteries necessarily were of a delay that was taking place in the arrival of the Kingdom for Israel. The following quotes help us flesh out why the delay? Why the mystery? Michael Vlach comments:

"A delay in the establishment of the kingdom does not mean the kingdom program has no connection with the present. Such a scenario is a mystery. While the OT predicted both a Suffering Servant and a Reigning Messiah, it did not explicitly state there would be two comings of the Messiah separated by a considerable period of time. This may be hinted at in a couple of OT passages. Psalm 110:1-2 stated that the Messiah would have a session at the

¹³ IBID, Pentecost, pp. 140-141.

¹⁴ Graham Scroggie, cited in IBID, p. 140

right hand of God until the Messiah reigns from Jerusalem. This includes a gap Peter said “must” occur in Acts 3:19-21. Also, Daniel 9:24-27 predicted Messiah would be “cut off” before all kingdom conditions were fulfilled. Events such as the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 needed to occur before the kingdom arrived (see Dan. 9:26-27). But, as Pentecost puts it,

“What the OT had not revealed was that an entire age would intervene between the offer of the kingdom by the Messiah and Israel’s acceptance of the King and enjoyment of full kingdom blessings.” This age Jesus describes covers the period from Israel’s rejection of Jesus through His return to earth at His second coming. The Messiah will suffer and die and then later come back to establish His kingdom upon earth.”¹⁵

Next, Pentecost sees this mystery factor as a good reason to be a premillennial;

“The existence of this present age, which was to interrupt God’s established program with Israel, was a mystery (Matt. 13:11). That Israel was to be blinded so that Gentiles might be brought into relation with God was a mystery (Rom. 11:25). The formulation of the church, made up of Jews and Gentiles to form a body, was a mystery (Eph. 3:3-9; Col. 1:26-27; Eph. 1:9; Rom. 16:25). This whole program of God which results in salvation was called a mystery (I Cor. 2:7). The relation of Christ to men in redemption was called a mystery (Col. 2:2; 4:3). The incarnation itself is called a mystery (I Tim. 3:16), not as to fact, but as to its accomplishment. The development of evil unto its culmination in the man of sin (2 Thess. 2:7) and the development of the great apostate religious system (Rev. 17:5,7) both constitute that which was called a mystery. That there should be a new method by which God received men into His presence apart from death was a mystery (1 Cor. 15:51). These, then, constitute a major portion of God’s program for the present age, which was not revealed in other ages, but is now known by revelation from God. (8)

The existence of an entirely new age, which only interrupts temporarily God’s program for Israel, is one of the strongest arguments for the premillennialist position. It is necessary for one who rejects that interpretation to prove that the church itself is the consummation of God’s program. To do so, he must prove that there is no new revealed program of God in this present age.”¹⁶ This makes “Christendom” a good title for the Interregnum.

Many theologians attempt to understand which Kingdom these parables are explaining.

Pentecost identifies 3 listed in the Bible – here is his stated position;

“Concerning this mystery form of the kingdom, it is observed in the first place, that it cannot be equated with the millennial kingdom, for that kingdom was no mystery but was clearly predicted in the Old Testament. In the second place, it cannot refer to the spiritual kingdom, for that kingdom is constituted of only saved individuals, who enter it by the new birth, but this mystery form of the kingdom is composed of saved and unsaved alike (wheat and tares, good and bad fish). It cannot refer, thirdly, to the eternal kingdom for these mysteries are limited in time to the inter-advent period. It cannot be limited, fourthly, to the church, for this mystery form of the kingdom includes more than the church. On the other hand, it must be observed, this mystery form of the kingdom has reference to things that were hitherto unrevealed, is definitely limited as to time, and represents the entire sphere of profession in

¹⁵ OP Cit, Michael Vlach, pg. 333-334

¹⁶ OP Cit, Pentecost, pg. 135-136

the present age. It is most important, eschatologically, to keep these three usages of the term kingdom separate and distinct.”¹⁷

The inter-advent period the parables refer to, as we’ve observed, covers the history between Christ’s death, resurrection, and ascension up to when He returns the second time to establish His Millennial Kingdom. The inter-advent period is not the Millennial Kingdom as pointed out above. Pentecost cites Charles Ryrie here; “The kingdom of the heavens is like unto.” This sets the time limit for the beginning of the subject matter involved. In other words, the kingdom of heaven was assuming the form described in the parables at that time when Christ was personally ministering on the earth. The end of the time period covered by these parables is indicated by the phrase “end of the world” or more literally “the consummation of the age. (vv. 39-49). This is the time of the second advent of Christ when He shall come in power and great glory. Therefore, it is clear that these parables are concerned only with that time between the days when Christ spoke them and the end of this age. This gives us a clue to the meaning of the phrase, “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.”¹⁸

Then citing Graham Scroggie again, Pentecost helps us interpret Matthew 13; “There are several keys to be used in the interpretation of this passage which will keep one from error. (1) First of all, some of the parables are interpreted by the Lord Himself. There can be no uncertainty as to their meaning, nor the method by which the rest of the parables are to be interpreted. Any interpretation of the whole must, of necessity, be in harmony with that which has been interpreted by the Lord. (2) A second important key is to observe that, while many of the parables are in figurative language, these figures are familiar ones throughout the Word and, therefore, will have the same usage here as used consistently elsewhere. The fact that these are not isolated figures makes interpretation easier. Scroggie has given us what he considers the key to interpretation when he writes,

“It appears to me that the key to the interpretation of these parables is in v. 52 of this chapter; “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.” These words of the things which precede, and surely speak of the parables as some new and some old? But which are old and which are new? In v. 1 we read that our Lord, “went out of the house, and sat by the seaside” and taught; and in v. 36, “then Jesus sent the multitudes away, and went into the house” and taught. Thus, the parables are divided into four spoken in public, and three spoken in private; and the evidence goes to show (if. V. 52 is the key) that the first four are the new treasures of truth and the last three are the old – that is, truths revealed before. Assuming this, the present Age is presented to our view in a series seven progressive pictures, describing the course of the kingdom in mystery.

Scroggie then lists the parables this way;

The New Things

- “1. The Seed and the Soils – The Proclamation of the Kingdom
2. The Wheat and the Darnel – False Imitation in the Kingdom
3. The Mustard Tree – Visible Extension in the Kingdom
4. The Leaven in the Meal – Insidious Corruption in the Kingdom

¹⁷ IBID, pg. 143-144

¹⁸ Charles Ryrie, cited by Pentecost, IBID, pg. 144

The Old Things

5. The Treasure – The Israelitish nation

6. The Pearl – The Jewish remnant during the Tribulation [here I disagree – the Pearl is the Church)

7. The Dagnet – The Judgment of the Nations at the end of the Tribulation”¹⁹

His is a different take on some of these points when compared to other expositors I’ve cited in this lesson, but he could be correct regarding the key importance of v. 52.

The church has not been mentioned much during this series on these parables, (except in lesson 8 – The Pearl of Great Value”) but I must point out here that during the inter-advent period, which we are also part of, the church certainly plays a large role, not as the new Israel, but as the mostly Gentile religious giant that looms large over this age, and will continue to do so till the end of the age.

Pentecost makes a good point regarding this:

“Since the church is given the hope of an imminent return of Christ, there can be no signs given to her as to when this event will take place. Therefore, we pass by the subject of “the signs of the times” in reference to the closing days for the church. However, from the Scriptures cited above, there are certain revelations concerning the condition within the professing church at the end of the age. These conditions center around a system of denials. There is a denial of God (Luke 17:26; II Tim. 3:4-5); a denial of Christ (I JN 2:18; 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:6); a denial of Christ’s return (2 Pet. 3:3-4); a denial of the faith (I Tim. 4:1-2; Jude 3); a denial of sound doctrine (2 Tim. 4:3-4); a denial of the separated life (2 Tim. 3: 1-7); a denial of Christian liberty ((I Tim. 4:3-4); a denial of morals ((2 Tim. 3:1-8, 13; Jude 18); a denial of authority ((2 Tim. 3:4). This condition at the close of the age is seen to coincide with the state within the Laodicean Church, before which Christ must stand to seek admission. In view of its close it is not surprising that the age is called “an evil age” in Scripture.”²⁰

Clarence Johnson comments appropriately;

“From God’s perspective, there is no postponement or addition of an age. It is all part of His eternal, singular plan to bring about the promised Kingdom and restoration of all things. The inter-advent period is not the Kingdom, or a mystery form of the Kingdom, or the mystery Kingdom. It is not the church. God was not surprised by the people’s rejection of Messiah, nor was the apparent postponement a reactive afterthought.

During this inter-advent period, the golden cord of a restored Kingdom that weaves the promises of all ages together may appear distant and hidden. Yet, it is just below the surface, waiting to be revealed in resplendent grandeur when Christ returns. On the other hand, the crimson cord of redemption has wound its way from Genesis 3:15 through the cross to a glorious resurrection from the dark, proclaiming that the price has been paid and the restoration of all things is now possible.”²¹

¹⁹ IBID – citing Scroggie, pg. 145

²⁰ IBID, pg. 155

²¹ Thy Kingdom Come, (FOI) Clarence Johnson, pp.96-97

Closing Statement

I am hopeful that this has been a thorough summary of what we've looked at so far. I haven't mentioned our lesson on Luke 19:11-27 – The Parable of the Minas, which also carries the same theme (maybe even more clearly) as the Matthew 13 Kingdom parables. We will also be looking at (DV) a couple of other pertinent parables – Matt. 23:1-14 – The King's Banquet; Matt. 21:33-46 – The Wicked Tenants; and possibly another couple of passages related to this theme. As time allows.

Answers to Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God in the Bible Appendix – The Book of Acts and the Second Offer of the Kingdom

As we move out of the 4 Gospels, the Interregnum has begun, and we first encounter the book of Acts. As we read Acts, we observe that the church is being established and is developing as people are saved, and doctrinal positions are being made to deal with specific theological issues (i.e., Acts 15 and the salvation of Gentiles), regarding Christ, salvation, evangelism, Judaism, the Holy Spirit, Jews and Gentiles, the trials and suffering of Paul and others in the church.

A couple of passages are striking regarding Israel and the advance of the Gospel to the Gentiles. Note Acts 13:44-48; 18:6 and 28:32-38. Remember, as we've seen, according to Luke 21:24, the Interregnum is "*the time of the Gentiles*". Acts 22:21 is Paul telling us that God has commissioned him to go to the Gentiles with the Gospel. (11)

So, what J. Sidlow Baxter (the author I picked this information up from) says, "Whatever other meanings the Acts of the Apostles may or may not have to a candid reader, the first meaning is surely a renewed offer of the Kingdom to Israel."²²

Acts is a book describing a time of transition from the Kingdom message of the Gospels to the church age of the Epistles. The mystery of the Church, never predicted in the OT, is finally revealed in the book of Acts. And the fact of its OT shroud of secrecy is also expressed in Ephesians 3:3-6; Col. 1:26-27. But as the Church becomes the dominant vehicle of God's message, and at the same time, the Jews become their own worst enemies as they fight against the message of the risen Christ all the way along – even as the evangelists risk their lives to bring the message of the Lord, the King, Jesus Christ.

The message is brought to them once again, and with now even more evidence – Jesus, whom they crucified, has risen from the dead and has established the reality of personal eternal salvation for those who believe (cf. Acts 10:43; 13:48).

Think about how Acts progresses, and how the second offer of the Kingdom is going out to the Jews, 1st at Jerusalem (chs 1-12), then throughout the empire of

²² J. Sidlow Baxter, *The Strategic Grasp of the Bible*, Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1968; pg. 127

Rome, to the Jews of the dispersion (Diaspora). And once again, the Jews refuse, by and large, to believe in their Messiah-King.

J. Sidlow Baxter comments on this:

“The doctrinal progress in the Acts is remarkable. Was there ever a more wonderful unfolding of events and truths going hand in hand? We start with the renewed offer of the “Kingdom” to the Jews, and end with “churches” planted throughout the land of the Gentiles; while from beginning to end, under the control of the now invisible Lord, the evolution of outward events is made to register the corresponding evolution of evangelical doctrine.

The Acts must immediately follow the four Gospels, for we need to see the completed external facts of our Lord’s life, death, resurrection and ascension in their first meaning for the Jews. Equally must the Acts precede the Christian Church Epistles, for we are thereby prepared to see the Christ-facts in their fuller meaning for the Church.

As the story opens, Jesus crucified, risen, ascended, is Israel’s Messiah; but more and more as the story unfolds, He is the world’s Saviour. All over the earlier pages we find “to the Jew first”; but more and more legibly, as the later pages are turned, we find “and also to the Gentiles.”²³

What do we see throughout Acts? Certainly, we see some Jews coming to Christ (Acts 2:37-41; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7; 13:12; 16:14). Christ is proclaimed as the only Saviour (4:8-12); Christ is being preached as exclusive Saviour to the Jews to convince them they erred in rejecting Him and killing Him (2:36;4:19-26; 5:12,42; 13:5-11; 14:20-23; 16:13-15; 18:4,18,19,28; 20:17-27; 28:23-28).

Stephen, one of the first deacons, is murdered for his conversion and boldly challenging the Sanhedrin (Acts 6:8-7:60), and this is seen as another serious rejection by Israel’s leadership against Jesus as their Messiah-King. Saul (who is renamed Paul), when we first meet him, is hunting down Christians and bringing them to jail where some will undoubtedly be killed, and all will suffer (8:1-3); but is himself converted to Christ in Acts 9 to become the Apostle to the Gentiles (cf. 9:1-25; 22:8-16; 26:17-18), and he himself becomes the target of the Jews, who seek his life (9:23-25; 14:5,19; 17:5-14; 19:21-41; 20:23-25; 21:27-22:22; and 23:12-21). Herod, wanting to gain popularity from the Jews he ‘rules’ over, has James the brother of John executed (12:1-2), and captured and would have executed Peter (12:3-18) but he escapes from prison via an Angel. As Paul and various companions²⁴ become missionaries , and when they go out they first look for a synagogue and preach to Jews they find in various locations (13:5; 14:2 for example). Then they preach to Gentiles, but the Jews often reject the message. Finally, Paul, facing rejection after rejection and physical violence, decides he will preach now to Gentiles (13:44-48; 18:6; 22:21: 28:23-18).

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So, by the time we read the end of Acts, we’ve seen a lot happening as the Interregnum is shaping up as the prophetic parables of Matthew 13 have predicted. Even though appeals have been made to the Jews, and many Jews have

²³ IBID, p. 129

²⁴ Barnabus, John Mark, Silas, Timothy, Priscilla and Aquila, Erastus, Luke, Sopater the Berean, Aristarchus, Secundus, Gaius of Derbe, Tychicus and Trophimus, and...others.

come to see Christ as their Messiah. And Jews have come to form many of the first churches. However, soon after the start of the church, the majority of people coming to Christ are Gentiles. There are groups of men and women – both Jews and gentiles – in what is chiefly Roman (Gentile territory) in the Middle East and southern Europe who do see Christ as their Lord and Saviour and King.

J. S. Baxter now comments about these Gentiles converted to Christ;

“What of them? They now become the crux of the story, for through them the very failure of Israel is being overruled in the formation of the church, of which those many scattered groups are the first units. Thus it is, that the narrative of the Acts is cut off as abruptly as the martyred Apostles themselves, and we find ourselves at the Christian Church Epistles.”²⁵

²⁵ IBID, p. 130