

## Three Kingdom Parables (13:24-33)

### Introduction

- Matthew 10-12 described opposition to both Jesus’ ministry and the ministry of His disciples. These parables begin to explain why. In 13:1-23, Jesus taught that both the devil and the pressures/pleasures of this world cause people to reject “*the word of the kingdom*” (13:18).
- All three of these parables are introduced with the phrases “*the kingdom of heaven may be compared to*” (13:24) and “*the kingdom of heaven is like*” (13:31,33).

### Tares Among the Wheat (13:24-30)

13:24 Jesus presented another parable to them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. 13:25 But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went away. 13:26 But when the wheat sprouted and bore grain, then the tares became evident also. 13:27 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?’ 13:28 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?’ 13:29 But he said, ‘No; for while you are gathering up the tares, you may uproot the wheat with them. 13:30 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.””

### The Mustard Seed (13:31-32)

13:31 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; 13:32 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.”

- The “*kingdom of heaven*” starts out “*smaller*” than earthly kingdoms. By appearances it seems insignificant. It is a small “*stone*” that “*became a great mountain and filled the whole earth*” (Daniel 2:35) and replaced all earthly kingdoms.
- Jesus alludes to Daniel 4:11-12,20-22. Babylon was a counterfeit to the Kingdom of God, but the Kingdom set up in Christ is the eternal reality.

### The Leaven (13:33)

13:33 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.”

- The “*kingdom of heaven*” starts out hidden, but eventually affects all things.

## Unveiling the Kingdom (13:34-35)

13:34 All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. 13:35 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet [in Psalm 78:2]:

“I will open My mouth in parables;

I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.”

- Notice the repeated pattern: there is a comment on Jesus’ style of preaching between the giving of the parable and the explanation of the parable to the disciples, just as there was in the parable of the sower (13:1-23).
- Psalm 78 is attributed to “*Asaph*,” who is described as having “*prophesied*” (1 Chronicles 25:2) and being a “*seer*” (2 Chronicles 29:30).
- What was “*hidden since the foundation of the world*”? That salvation for fallen humanity would be accomplished by the coming King, Who would in His suffering crush the devil and in His resurrection take the throne over all creation. This was communicated throughout the Old Testament in prophecies, symbols, and shadows that would not be fully revealed until the coming of Christ and the inspiration of the New Testament.

- Psalm 78 ends with the raising up of David (78:68-72); Jesus is the “*son David...the king*” (1:1,20; 9:27; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9,15; 22:42).

### Explanation: Kingdom Judgment (13:36-43)

<sup>13:36</sup>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.” <sup>13:37</sup>And He said, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, <sup>13:38</sup>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; <sup>13:39</sup>and the enemy who sowed them is the devil, and the harvest is the end of the age; and the reapers are angels. <sup>13:40</sup>So just as the tares are gathered up and burned with fire, so shall it be at the end of the age. <sup>13:41</sup>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, <sup>13:42</sup>and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>13:43</sup>Then the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

#### Disciples Desire Understanding (13:36)

- One mark of having “*who has ears*” (13:9,43) is that they seek to understand the “*word of the kingdom*” (13:18) by seeking an explanation from their God-given teachers (Ephesians 4:11-16).

#### Humanity Divided (13:37-43)

- “*The Son of Man,*” Who is God’s appointed King over the Kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14), is putting “*the sons of the kingdom*” into the world. The “*sons of the kingdom*” are Jesus’ disciples. The word “*sons*” is used because believers are heirs to the Kingdom; it is our inheritance as members of the royal family.
- Those who are not followers of Jesus are “*sons of the evil one*” (13:38). These are “*those who commit lawlessness*” (13:41). These are the “*seed*” of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), children of the devil because

of their rejection of Christ (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8-10). This is true of all humanity, born in sin and outside of Christ; this is why we must be “*born again*” by trusting the word of Christ (John 3:3; 1 Peter 1:3,23).

- Jesus clearly teaches a judgment where those who are not His are cast into hell.

### Daniel’s Prophecy Realized (13:43)

- In 13:11, Jesus tells the disciples they have been “*granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.*” The word “*mystery*” in the Bible has a very specific meaning.<sup>1</sup> In the O.T., “*mystery*” is used exclusively in Daniel 2:18-19,27-30,47; 4:9.<sup>2</sup> **By describing His teaching as the “*mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,*” Jesus is telling us that His life and teachings are the beginning of the eternal Kingdom promised in Daniel 2.**
- Jesus ends the parable by quoting Daniel 12:3. He calls the Kingdom of heaven the “*kingdom of their Father.*” READ Colossians 1:12-13.

### Only Believers Will Understand

- To have ears that don’t hear and eyes that don’t see is O.T. language for an idolater: READ Psalm 115:3-8; 135:15-18.
- “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear*” (11:15; 13:9,43) is a call to those who worship the one true God in Christ Jesus. They will hear, understand, and live out the truth of the Kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> In all four Gospels, the word “*mystery*” only occurs as Jesus is explaining His use of parables (Mark 4:11; Luke 8:10).

<sup>2</sup> The “*night vision*” of Daniel 2, given by the “*God in heaven Who reveals mysteries,*” is about a succession of empires (Babylon, Medo-Persian, Greek, Roman) which end with God setting up His unstoppable Kingdom in the days of the fourth earthly empire. Jesus’ use of the word “*mysteries*” in connection with the “*kingdom of heaven*” tells us that Daniel 2 was being fulfilled by His ministry.