

Outline of Parables around “*Kingdom of Heaven*” Theme

(Synthesized from J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Parables of Jesus*, pp. 161-180)

A. The Offer of the Kingdom

1. The Uniqueness of Christ’s Offer

- *Patched Garment and Wineskins*—(Luke 5:36-39)—Jesus Christ came to introduce a kingdom that was new and unique, and had no relationship to the concepts of the kingdom espoused by the Pharisees.

2. Offer extended to sinners to enter the Kingdom

- *Lost sheep, lost coin, lost son* (Luke 15:1-32)—Jesus told these parables to emphasize that any sinner is welcome to avail himself of the offer that He was making and to enter into the kingdom in the way that the Messiah had prescribed.

3. Warning against rejection

- *Blind leading the blind* (Luke 6:39)—warning about following the Pharisees who had already rejected Christ.

4. Announcement of the Kingdom

- *King and the Wedding Banquet* (Matthew 22:1-14)—an invitation was given to that generation to enter the covenanted kingdom.
- *Man preparing a great banquet* (Luke 14:16-24)—same truth taught

B. The Rejection of the Offer

- *Physician heal yourself* (Luke 4:23)—viewing of Christ as a “sinner” in need of healing himself.
- *King and the Wedding Banquet* (Matt 22:1-14)—reveals the response of the invited guests to the invitation. The guests were occupied with personal pursuits and refused to be interrupted in order to respond to the invitation.
- *Great Banquet* (Luke 14:16-24)—reveals the guests “made excuses” as to why they rejected the invitation.
- *Landowner and Vineyard* (Matthew 21:33-44)—reveals the forceful, violent rejection of the kingdom offer that the Messiah was making.

C. The Postponement of the Kingdom

- *Ten Minas* (Luke 19:11-27)—teaches that the kingdom offer was being withdrawn and the Davidic form of the theocracy postponed. Christ’s affirms in this parable that Israel’s rejection of Him as Messiah did not set aside His rights, nor did His absence mean that he had relinquished His rights. In his own time, He would return to exercise the reign that is rightly His.
- *Watchman and the Door* (Mark 13:34-37)—Christ’s postponement of the kingdom and His absence from the realm in which the kingdom would be instituted at His return.
- *Landowner and Vineyard* (Matthew 21:33-44)—the kingdom offer would be withdrawn from the present generation because of their rejection, and given to another people at a future time.

D. The Judgment of Christ’s Generation for Rejecting Messiah

- *Landowner and Vineyard* (Matthew 21:33-44)—Christ is the “stone that the builder rejected” who would be their judge.
- *Cleansed Household* (Matthew 12:43-45)—The state of the nation was lower as a consequence of their rejection of Him than it had been before John began his ministry of calling the nations to repentance.... This parable shows that an offer had been made that, if accepted, would have removed judgment, the nation had rejected the offer and so judgment must come.

E. The New Form of the Kingdom-- The promised and Davidic form of the theocracy offered to that generation by Jesus Christ was rejected. He therefore passed judgment on that generation and the offer of the Davidic

kingdom was withdrawn. However, because the kingdom was based on an eternal, unconditional covenant, it could not be abrogated; instead it was postponed to some indeterminate future time. Christ chose to reveal through parables the form of the theocracy through which God would evidence His sovereign authority during this present age.

- ***Sower and the Seeds*** (Matthew 13:3-23)—presents the sowing of the seed of the Word of God throughout the world. No longer would Israel be the primary recipient of the message as was true in the OT and during the ministry of the apostles in the Gospels and early chapters of Acts. To this sowing would be varied responses, depending upon the attitudes of the listeners. Thus, the world-wide dissemination of the truth that Christ revealed would be the first characteristic of this age.
- ***Weeds*** (Matthew 13:24-30)—reveals Satan’s attempts to defeat God’s program and to exercise his right to rule by sowing weeds among the good seeds—and it may not be possible to determine the genuine from the fake until the time of the harvest. Thus, we may anticipate the opposition of Satan in doing the Lord’s work.
- ***Seed Growing by Itself*** (Mark 4:26-29)—emphasizes that when the new form of the kingdom is introduced by the sowing of the seed of God’s Word, that kingdom will develop by the power in the seed that was sown. Just as a sower’s work is completed when physical seed is put into the soil, so human responsibility will end when the message has been proclaimed. The development of the kingdom will not depend on human agency but on the power of the Word that has been proclaimed.
- ***Mustard Seed*** (Matthew 13:31-32)—reveals that the kingdom would begin with an insignificant beginning but grow to great proportions.... The new form of the kingdom began essentially with 11 men. From that insignificant beginning, it grew so extensively that when the Book of Acts closed the whole world had heard the gospel (Romans 1:8; Col. 1:6)
- ***Yeast and the Flour*** (Matthew 13:33)—reveals that when the new form of the kingdom began, it would work irreversibly, persistently, and pervasively throughout this present age.
- ***Hidden treasures and pearl*** (Matthew 13:44-45)—Christ emphasized the value of the treasure and the pearl that purchasers obtained through great personal sacrifice. By his death, Christ was to become the propitiation for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2). As a result of Christ’s propitiatory act, the world was reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:18-19). God’s plan in the present age is to acquire for Himself a treasure. Since the field or land is frequently a reference to Israel, the parable of the hidden treasure emphasizes that some from the nation will be part of the kingdom in this present age. Since pearls come from the sea and since the sea is used in Scripture to represent the Gentile nations (cf. Isa. 57:20), the parable of the pearl emphasizes that God will call to Himself many from among the Gentile nations as His own possession. These parables form the basis of Paul’s doctrine of the nature of the church in Ephesians 2:11-22.
- ***Net*** (Matthew 13:47-50)—reveals that at the end of the age, prior to the establishment of the millennial kingdom, there will be a judgment to exclude the unsaved and to invite the saved to participate in the joys and blessings of Christ’s reign.
- ***Householder*** (Matthew 13:52)—reveals that some aspects of this new form of the kingdom would be like previous forms; on the other hand, some aspects would be completely new. And as custodian of the storehouse, he would fully meet the needs of his household.

F. Exhortations in View of Christ’s Second Coming to Establish Millennial Kingdom

- ***Fig Tree*** (Matthew 24:32-35)—Matthew 24 enumerated many signs that would find fulfillment in the seven years of Tribulation. These signs will be given to alert a disobedient people to whom the kingdom is being offered again of the approach of the Judge, their returning Messiah.

- *Doorkeeper* (Mark 13:33-37)—emphasizes faithfulness in the light of the unexpectedness of His return.
- *Watchful Owner* (Matthew 24:42-44)—emphasizes both watchfulness and preparedness
- *Wise and Wicked Servant* (Matthew 24:45-51)—emphasizes the need for faithfulness to the assigned responsibilities in view of the approach of the Lord’s return as indicated by the signs. A wise servant will fulfill responsibilities but a foolish one will neglect assigned duties and live to indulge the flesh. such a faithless servant will be deprived of the joys of the kingdom when the master returns.

G. Events preparing for the Establishment of the Millennial Kingdom—In the parables revealing the characteristics of the present age, Christ revealed this age will end in judgment.

1. Judgment on Living Israel

- *Wise and Foolish Virgins* (Matthew 25:1-13)—reveals that there will be a judgment to determine preparedness of those in Israel alive at the time of Christ’s Second Coming... In this parable Christ taught that living Israel would be brought back to the land for a judgment to determine who was prepared and who was unprepared... The Old Testament made it clear that repentance and restoration to fellowship with the God against whom the Israelites had sinned was a prerequisite for the enjoyment of the covenanted kingdom of blessings (Deut. 30:1-10). Thus, it was revealed that no unsaved person will enter the promised kingdom.

2. Judgment on the Living Gentiles

- *Sheep and Goats* (Matthew 25:31-46)—reveals that Gentiles will be gathered to judgment. The “sheep” having demonstrated their faith in God by their treatment of Israel during the tribulation, will be accepted into the kingdom. The goats on the left, who have not produced works in keeping with faith, will be excluded from the kingdom. Christ thus explains the tests to be given to Gentiles to prove the state of their preparedness as individuals.

3. Judgment for Rewards

- *Talents* (Matthew 25:14-30)—reveals that there will be a judgment prior to the millennial kingdom to test one’s faithfulness. Responsibilities were assigned. Accountability upheld. Those found faithful were admitted into the master’s domain and given position of responsibility in the administration of his affairs. Those found unfaithful were cast out of the household and excluded from the kingdom

H. Life in the Kingdom—reveals what Jesus Christ expects of His subjects

1. Obedience

- *Two Sons* (Matthew 21:28-32)—reveals that a person’s right to enter the kingdom will be determined not by his profession but by his obedience to the King. Obedience will not only be a test of eligibility, but it will be required of those who are in the kingdom.

2. Love

- *Two Debtors* (Luke 7:41-45)—teaches that the basis for love is forgiveness. Love for Christ will be shown by those who have experienced His gracious forgiveness. And Christ will accept that love when it flows from one who has received His forgiveness.
- *Good Samaritan* (Luke 10:30-37)—teaches that mercy as a manifestation of love is to be demonstrated to anyone who is a neighbor. Our neighbor is anyone in need, whose need we know, and whose need we are able to meet.

3. Prayer—an act of worship in which the one praying submits to the authority of the One to whom prayer is offered. Prayer will play an important role in life in the kingdom.

a. The Basis of Prayer

- *Pharisee and Tax Collector* (Luke 18:9-14)—reveals the basis on which one may approach God in prayer. The Pharisee thought that he could approach God on the basis of his works and so he

reiterated in his prayer the evidences of his righteousness. On the other hand, the tax collector recognized that there was nothing to commend himself to God. By faith, he put himself under the propitiating blood provided on the Day of Atonement and under which the unworthy could take refuge. Because he put himself under the blood, Christ said that he went home “justified”.

b. Persistence in Prayer

- *Persistent widow* (Luke 18:1-18)—reveals that even a hard-hearted, indifferent judge can be moved by the persistence of a widow to grant her request.
- *Persistent friend* (Luke 11:5-13)—emphasis on persistent, intercessory prayer for the one presenting the request to the friend was not the one in need. Unselfish, intercessory prayer will be a characteristic of life in the kingdom.

4. The Use of Wealth

a. The Use of Present Opportunities

- *Shrewd Manager* (Luke 16:1-13)—Christ stresses that a righteous person will not misuse a stewardship selfishly, thinking only of the present; instead a righteous man will act wisely, and with a view to a future reckoning in the stewardship... Christ commends the manger for wisdom in using present opportunities, not for the present only, but for the future. He then applies the principle to the use of wealth... Thus Christ taught that a mark of life in the kingdom will be the wise use of material possessions.

b. The Temporary Nature of Material Things

- *Rich man and Lazarus* (Luke 16:19-31)—reveals that material wealth is not permanent, but only temporary. The rich man left all of his material possessions behind. The parable teaches further that wealth is not the basis of salvation... A rich man, according to the Biblical concept is not one who has great material riches, but one who loves what God has given and trusts Him for salvation. This parable also teaches that poverty is not necessarily an evidence of God’s displeasure or punishment for sin.

c. The reward of covetousness

- *Rich fool* (Luke 12:16-21) – shows that one’s use of wealth will reveal whether one is righteous or unrighteous. Jesus in the parable is stressing that wealth must be rightly used during this life if it is to provide any benefit in the life to come.

5. Faithfulness

- *Faithful and Wise Manager* (Luke 12:42-48)—emphasizes that privilege brings responsibility and that responsibility entails accountability.

6. Humility

- *Seating at a Wedding Feast* (Luke 14:7-11)—warned against seeking preeminence for oneself. True honor is not what one confers on oneself, but what others confer in recognition of worthiness.