

Matthew Thirteen

1. Christ in Matthew chapter thirteen presents several parables about two ages to come. Our Lord makes public His Kingdom offering has been rejected.

2. No longer will He refer to Israel as being the recipient of an "at hand" Kingdom. Prior to the Matthew thirteen parables, Christ's Kingdom was often described as being at hand. In the Old Testament and early Kingdom Age, Israel's dispensation perspective is best described in chart form.

GENTILES				ISRAEL	KINGDOM
Positive Volition	Negative Volition	Noah's Family	Jewish Patriarchs	Jewish Client Nation	+
Creation of man	Fall of Adam	Flood	Abraham	Moses and the Exodus	Birth of Christ

2.1 John the Baptist alerted Israel of Christ's Kingdom being at hand.

2.2 The Lord Himself also often spoke of the Kingdom being at hand.

Mat 3:1 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,
 Mat 3:2 And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Mar 1:14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,
 Mar 1:15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

2.2.1 Jesus, after His temptation in the wilderness, announced His Kingdom was at hand.

Mat 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

2.2.2 Jesus told the twelve disciples to go out and announce to Israel that the Kingdom is at hand.

Mat 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

2.3 In the Tribulation, you can know as a fact, the Kingdom will again be at hand says our Lord. Luk 21:29-32

Luk 21:29 And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig tree, and all the trees;
 Luk 21:30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

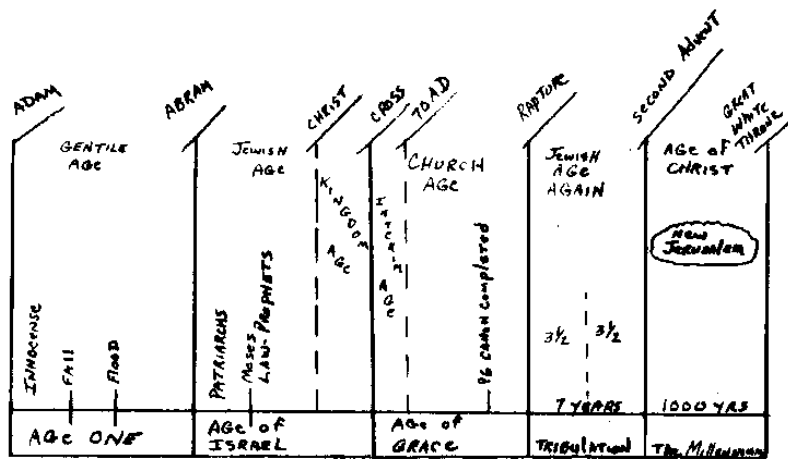
Luk 21:31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

Luk 21:32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled.

2.3.1 The Tribulation immediately follows the Rapture and lasts seven years.

3. The Kingdom, with Christ as the resident leader of Israel, must now await the Second Advent. By hindsight, we know His Kingdom awaits events future. The two inter-Advent ages are: the Church Age and the Tribulation.

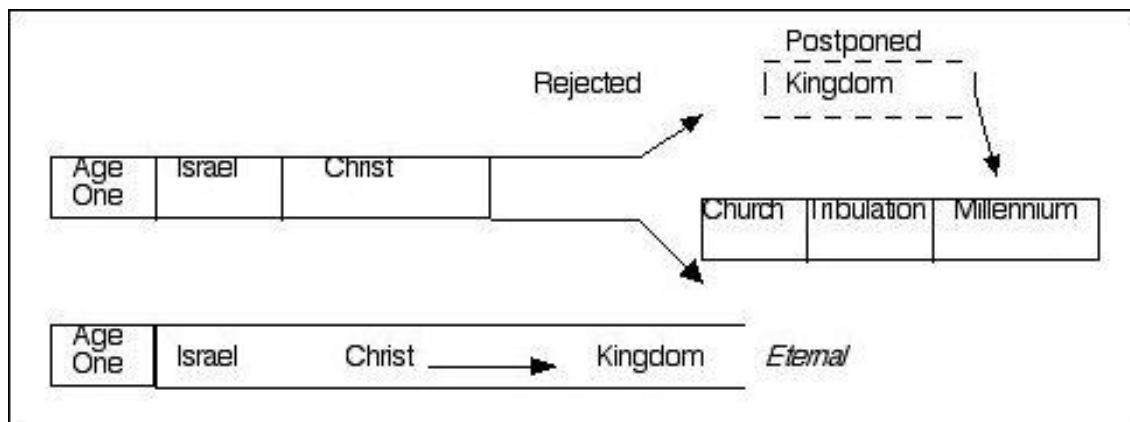
4. Clearly, there will be an interval and during that interval several changes will occur. The interval, though technically indeterminate, consists of two future ages beginning in A.D. 70 and extending through the Tribulation. The Church Age began with the destruction of the Temple in A.D. 70. The indeterminate nature of the two ages is a product of the indeterminate tenure of the Church Age--the Tribulation consists of two three-and-one-half year periods, thus seven years.



4.1 Since Israel rejected the offered Kingdom, the question naturally arises, "What will happen to God's Kingdom program?" The Kingdom has been rejected and the King is absent. This is something Christianity, since its early councils, has wrestled.

4.2 Let's begin our analysis of the Matthew thirteen parables. Jesus will teach seven parables to describe what will happen when His Kingdom message is rejected.

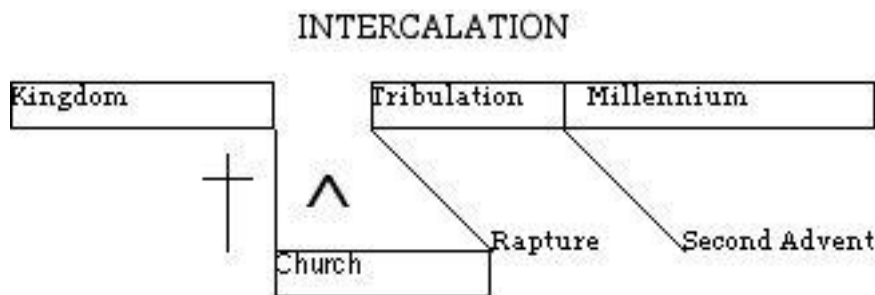
4.3 Since the Kingdom is based on an irrevocable and unconditional covenant it is unthinkable that the Kingdom promise could be abandoned.



4.4 The chapter thirteen parables unveil the events in the development of the Kingdom program from the time of its rejection until it is received by Israel at His Second Advent.

5. The parables to come describe the form of the Kingdom while the King is absent. The King is in heaven awaiting events future.

6. Let's take a look at the Matthew thirteen parables and how they provide one of the few glimpses into the future two inter-Advent dispensations found in the gospels. A look at our Intercalation Chart will help orient us to the demise of the Kingdom offering and the inter-Advent replacements.



7. And now for our subject--Jesus teaches in parables.

Mat 13:1 The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the sea side.
 Mat 13:2 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.

8. The Parable of the Sower

Mat 13:3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

Mat 13:4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Mat 13:5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth:

Mat 13:6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

Mat 13:7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

Mat 13:8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundredfold, some sixtyfold, some thirtyfold.

Mat 13:9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

8.1 The Parable of the Sower Explained

8.1.1 The Lord Himself interpreted the parable of the sower.

Mat 13:18 Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

Mat 13:19 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.

Mat 13:20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

Mat 13:21 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.

Mat 13:22 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 becometh unfruitful.

Mat 13:23 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.

8.1.2 There are four types of individuals listed in this first parable. There is the unbeliever of Mat 13:4. The bird is the devil and the seed is the gospel of salvation. Because it falls by the wayside, the bird is able to snatch it away. The second individual described in Mat 13:5 and 6 is a believer who receives the Word and there is enough soil (positive volition) for the salvation doctrine to take hold. But because of subsequent tribulation and persecution, his spiritual growth ceases and he, though a believer, soon becomes a casualty in the angelic conflict. The third individual of Mat 13:7, likewise, is a believer but the seed falls among thorns but nonetheless he receives it only to find the deceitfulness of riches chokes the Word, and he becomes unfruitful. Though a believer, he is just another casualty in the angelic conflict. And lastly, our hero, who receives the Word and continues in it until he produces just exactly what God would have him produce.

9. The Parable of the Tares

Mat 13:24 Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

Mat 13:25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

Mat 13:26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

Mat 13:27 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?

Mat 13:28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

Mat 13:29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

Mat 13:30 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.

9.1 The Parable of the Tares Explained

9.1.1 The Lord also interpreted the parable of the tares.

Mat 13:36 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.

Mat 13:37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

Mat 13:38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

Mat 13:39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

Mat 13:40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Mat 13:41 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;

Mat 13:42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Mat 13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

9.1.2 The true sowing, emphasized in the parable, will be imitated by a false sowing.

There is to be a side-by-side development of that which is good with that which is evil because of the two sowings. There will be a judgment at the end of the age to separate the good from the evil. The wheat will be received into the Millennial Kingdom and the tares excluded. The devil comes in and sows the tares or darnel wheat.

9.1.3 The tares in the Greek is a particular kind of worthless wheat (tares) which grows up in the field and looks like good wheat. The difference is it is poisonous to man and herbivorous animals causing nausea, vomiting, and even death in some. As a seed it looks the same, and as a plant it looks the same.

9.1.4 The wheat represents the believer and the tares the unbeliever. Many feel this parable is to be related specifically to the Tribulation excluding the Church; yet it is true that the entire Church Age will be characterized by a false sowing in competition with the true. There are certainly several clear messages in this parable. First, do not try to get rid of the tares, after all you can't tell the difference, and by all means don't try to clean up the devil's world for as J. Vernon McGee has written, "God didn't call him to clean up the pond but to fish out of it." Secondly, God will do the harvesting and thirdly, you and I have been planted. We should think on that and be the very best plant possible. Bloom where you are, for it was God Himself who planted you and gave you a special place in His garden.

10. The Parable of the Mustard Seed

Mat 13:31 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:

Mat 13:32 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.

10.1 The Parable of the Mustard Seed Explained

The church of the Church Age and the Tribulation is characterized by an abnormal external growth. In the verse the birds are used negatively so it would seem logical that such should also be the interpretation here. Both Dwight Pentecost and H.A. Ironside agree that the mustard seed, though small would grow until it becomes powerful in the world. The tree would seem to refer to a perversion of the Church, which started from one small seed of faith. The tree grows so powerful that the birds representing false teachers find a place in it. The birds then represent all kinds of false professors and evil teachers and false and evil congregates who find places in the branches of the growing church. Like in the case of the tares, believers and unbelievers worship and work side-by-side.

11. The Parable of the Leaven

Mat 13:33 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.

11.1 The Parable of the Leaven Explained

The yeast represents sin and evil which will mix during the inter-Advent period with the universal church. This we have certainly seen in the Church Age; also a consistent symbolic meaning of leaven throughout Scripture. Once in the loaf, the yeast is indiscernible. It would seem any number of interpretations would fit so long as the symbol of the leaven represents false doctrine, sin and evil mixed indistinguishably into the church loaf.

12. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Mat 13:44 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.

C. I. Scofield writes, “This is one of the most obvious of the parables. The field, according to Mat 13:38, is the world which was purchased by the Lord Jesus at the priceless cost of His own blood that He might have the treasure. As Israel was God’s treasure in Old Testament times, so there is at the present time a remnant (of Israel) according to the election of grace. Those who compose the remnant are no longer reckoned as Jews but as members of the ‘one body’ together with saved Gentiles and thus Christ’s inheritance and His joy.”

13. The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

Mat 13:45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

Mat 13:46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

13.1 The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price Explained

This parable would seem to relate to the universal church of the Church Age given the fact that many pearls are sought in the sea or ocean. The sea is symbolic of the nations. Pearls are a product of accretion, i.e., growth or increase in size is a product of gradual external addition, fusion, or inclusion. So it would seem to be with the church; Christ having given Himself for the pearl, is now preparing it for presentation.

It goes without saying, however, that Christ's purchase included both Jew and Gentile (Church Age saints being one in Christ) and this pearl is being prepared for presentation at His Second Advent. A pearl if subjected to darkness and the absence of air will turn to sand and become worthless, just as sin, evil and an absence of doctrine in the life of a believer proves a deleterious regression in a believer’s spiritual life. Pearls therefore must be displayed or lose value, and thus a believer must “let his light so shine before men” for he was bought with such a great price.

14. The Parable of the Dragnet

Mat 13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

Mat 13:48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

Mat 13:49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

Mat 13:50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

14.1 The Parable of the Dragnet Explained

C. I. Scofield seems to have best interpreted this fairly obvious parable: "The parable ... presents another view from that of the wheat and tares, that of the mystery of the kingdom as the sphere of profession, with this difference: there Satan was the active agent; here the admixture is more the result of the tendency of a movement to gather to itself that which is not really of it. The kingdom of heaven is like a net which, cast into the sea of humanity, gathers of every kind, good and bad. These remain together in the net (v 49) and not merely in the sea, until the end of the age. It is not even a converted net, much less a converted sea. Much violence has been done to sound exegesis by the notion that the world is to be converted in this age. Against that notion stands our Lord's own interpretation of the parables of the sower, the wheat and tares, and the net."

I recall a story from a seasoned fisher-lady who would not swim in the ocean. She warned, "I have seen too many really weird creatures pulled out of the sea." Indeed there are some weird creatures that will one day be removed from the net and cast into the Lake of Fire.

