

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Theme: *Christ the King*

Outline:

Chps. 1-2 The Advent of the King. (Proving His LEGAL right to the throne by His genealogy.)

Chp. 3 The Forerunner of the King and the King’s baptism.

Chp. 4 The Test of the King. (Proving His MORAL right to the throne by not yielding to temptation; and exhibiting His kingdom resume.)

Chps. 5-7 The Pronouncements of the King. (Proving His JUDICIAL right to the throne as seen in the wisdom of His kingdom teaching.)

Chps. 8-10 The Power of the King. (Proving His PROPHETICAL right to the throne by fulfilling prophecy.)

Chps. 11-12 The Rejection of the King.

Chp. 13 The Parables of the King.

Chps. 14-16 The Revelations of the King.

Chps. 17-20 The Instructions of the King.

Chps. 21-23 Formal Rejection of the King.

Chps. 24-25 The Predictions of the King.

Chps. 26-27 The Passion of the King.

Chp. 28 The Resurrection of the King.

Matthew 13 marks a major turning point in the book and a major shift in the ministry of Jesus Christ. This shift denotes a form of judgment on “**this wicked generation**” which is seen in Christ now addressing the crowds strictly in parables which they could not understand (cf. Mt. 12:39, 45).

After all the SIGN evidence clearly showing that Jesus is the prophesied Messiah, the people of Israel largely rejected His claims. Their rejection is seen in their lack of repentance as noted by Christ in chapter 11 and also in the representation of the religious leaders who went so far as to claim Jesus was doing His phenomenal miracles by the power of Satan as seen in chapter 12.

Therefore, Jesus called that entire generation, “**An evil and adulterous generation**” (12:39) and also “**this wicked generation**” (12:45). The focus at this point goes from reaching out to the nation to Christ inviting all individuals who labor and are heavy laden to come and find rest in Him as seen in Matthew 11:28. And then in chapter 12 Jesus puts the focus on a personal relationship with Him saying in Matt. 12:50, “**For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.**”

Matthew 13 is the third of 5 major discourses in the book.

Slide # 2

The 5 Discourses in Matthew

- The Sermon on the Mount – Matt. 5-7
- Commissioning of the Twelve – Matt. 10
- **Parables of the Kingdom - Matt. 13**
- Community Instructions - Matt. 18
- Olivet Discourse (End Times) Matt. 24-25

Matthew 13:1–15 (NKJV)

1 On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea.

This verse connects Christ’s teaching of parables in chapter 13 to the same day of what has just happened in chapter 12 regarding the sin of blasphemy against the Spirit and Christ declaring the people of His day a “**wicked generation**”. So, the parable teachings in chapter 13 directly connect back to the rejection of the nation as seen in chapter 12.

Slide # 3

Matthew links the parabolic discourse in chapter 13 to the preceding controversies (either 12:38-50 or 12:22-37) and ends it with a formulaic conclusion (13:53), which implies that all these parables were given on this occasion. – **D.A. Carson**

2 And great multitudes were gathered together to Him, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

Masses of people were following Christ at this time but MOST of them were fickle and not real disciples. Hence, the parables addressing their unbelief and their lack of repentance. Christ saw right through their fickleness!

3 Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: “Behold, a sower went out to sow.

Here we are introduced to Christ’s ministry of parables. And frankly all kinds of error has been brought into the Church because of not correctly handling the parabolic teachings of Christ. Even a huge segment of my dispensational brethren are off on this topic. Many get the parables WRONG and yet it is a very important part of Christ’s teaching ministry.

The word parable literally means “to cast alongside”.

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Parable is a combination of two Greek words.

Para (alongside) **Ballo** (to cast): **Parable: To cast alongside.**

- It is a story, or a comparison, that is put alongside something else to help make the lesson clear. – **Warren Wiersbe**

Parables are true to life stories that teach spiritual truth by way of analogy. But the parables have suffered terrible abuse because of errant teaching. It has been said that the parables have suffered a fate of misinterpretation second only to the book of Revelation. That might be a pretty accurate analysis.

In the early church parables became subject to extreme allegorism. In reaction to this many interpreters came to emphasize that there is only one single point being made in a parable. But that would seem to go too far because Christ’s own interpretation of His parables often makes several points of analogy as seen for example in the parable of the Sower and the soils.

The first parable that Jesus shares is called the parable of the Sower and the soils. It is **introductory** and is a “**gateway**” parable that is foundational to all the other parables in Matthew 13. This is the first of 7 parables in Matt. 13, but it is different. The other six begin with the formula, “**The kingdom of heaven is like...**” but this first one does not have that formula.

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The Parable of the Sower does not begin with “The Kingdom of heaven is like” because it describes how the kingdom begins.

– **Warren Wiersbe**

In a sense this first parable is an EVANGELISTIC OUTLINE parable that describes who ultimately is going to be in the kingdom. That is the ultimate issue. Those that respond properly to the Word will go into the kingdom. That is the issue with this parable – showing that there are various responses to the Word but only a sincere life-changing response that bears fruit will get you into the kingdom.

Thus, this first parable of the Sower and the soils is really the premier parable on which all the rest build which is reflected in Mark 4:13.

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Mark 4:13 (NKJV)

13 And He said to them, “Do you not understand **this parable?** [**About the Sower and the soils**] How then will you understand all the parables?

This parable of the Sower and the soils is basic to understanding all the rest because as I say it is foundational to understanding who will ultimately even go into the kingdom. Once you understand that reality then the other kingdom insights build on it.

Jesus begins this first parable by saying, “**Behold, a sower went out to sow.**” Jesus Himself will interpret this parable in verses 18-23 so we will wait to unpack it at length until next time, but for now I will touch on some of the basic points.

The parable has three main elements, namely the sower, the seed, and the soils. The seed is the Word of God which is spread everywhere in the path of the sower. However, the emphasis in the parable is on the different kinds of soils which represent various responses to the kingdom message.

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It explains how the message of the kingdom is not received by all. It could be baffling to contemplate how the Messiah and His message could be rejected by so many. How could Israel reject her Messiah? **But this parable explains why.** There is nothing wrong with the sower (Jesus) or the seed (the kingdom message). But there is something wrong with the hearts of men who hear the message. (emphasis mine)

– **Dr. Michael Valch**

4 And as he sowed, some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them.

5 Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.

6 But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

Here we have three different kinds of soils that represent various kinds of rejection that ultimately don't really receive the Word. They all heard the Word but were not receptive.

The **wayside** represents hearts that are unresponsive; the **stony places** represent an initial emotional response but lacking true repentance has no root in the heart; and that which fell among **thorns** represents a divided heart that is non-committal. All of these first three soils represent unbelievers who in the end will not go into the kingdom.

8 But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.

Remember what Jesus said is indicative of true disciples at the end of chapter 12? There in 12:50 He said, "**whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.**" Doing the will of the Father is fruit which is characteristic of all those who have a saving faith relationship with Jesus.

This [good ground] soil alone illustrates what it means to be Jesus' true disciple. That a person has really understood and received the gospel of the kingdom will be evident in the way he or she lives (v. 23; cf. 7:16-21). – ***Evangelical Commentary on the Bible***

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Just as there are three levels of not believing the Word of God (13:4-7), there are also three levels of productivity in the hearts of those who believe. Some produce fruit a hundredfold, some produce fruit sixtyfold, and some produce fruit thirtyfold. But Jesus presents no category where a true believer produces fruit "zerofold."

– ***Dr. David Jeremiah***

Bearing fruit is consistent with doing the will of the Father. It is consistent with "**fruit**", "**more fruit**" and "**much fruit**" in John 15:1-5. There is no category for NO FRUIT for the true believer.

Slide # 9

Only the seed on good soil bears fruit (13:23). These are true believers who bear fruit for God and are in a position to receive more kingdom truths. In sum, as the kingdom message is proclaimed many will reject it while only a few will believe. – **Dr. Michael Vlach**

9 He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

Whenever Jesus says this, He is making a statement of paramount importance as if to say, *“It is essential that you LISTEN to this and get it – that you apply it and appropriate it – that you take it to heart.”* This exhortation is found 16 times in the NT.

Again, in context, He is saying that it is imperative that one respond properly to the Word in order to be saved and go into the kingdom. That is the whole point of this opening parable. This statement warns that the message of the kingdom comes with great accountability and that one had better take it very seriously. After all one’s place in the kingdom is dependent upon it!

It is essential to really HEAR the Word of God in the sense that we personally take it to heart because “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17).

10 And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?”

Clearly, how Jesus was addressing the crowd with parables at this point was different in the eyes of the disciples than what Jesus had previously been doing. This was different and they knew it.

Previously Jesus had used parabolic language on occasion to illustrate His message as seen for example in the wise man building his house upon the rock and the foolish man building upon the sand as seen in Matt. 7:24-27; or in the language of new wine in old wineskins in Matt. 9:16-17, etc.

But this was different. Now parables formed the entire basis of His message to them, and they didn’t get it. Up to this point in His ministry Jesus had never taught the crowds strictly in the form of parables. Therefore, the disciples wanted to know WHY this change. They couldn’t understand why Jesus just didn’t tell them “***Straight out***” what He was wanting to say.

11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

The parables did two things – they *revealed* further kingdom truth to true disciples, and they *concealed* this same truth from those not accepting of the kingdom truth which they had already been given. This principle is consistent with what Jesus taught in Matthew 7:6.

Slide # 10

Matthew 7:6 (NKJV)

6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

There is a time when it is inappropriate to give more of God’s sacred truth to those who are hardened to it and blasphemously opposed. The nation as a whole (as led by its leaders) had reached that point and therefore further kingdom truth was hidden from them. Yes, Christ was still reaching out to individuals, but the nation as a whole was in sync with the religious leaders and therefore would not receive further kingdom truth. It would be hidden from them.

Note the word “*mysteries*”. There has been so much confusion here and really needlessly so. If interpreters would just consistently apply proper rules of interpretation the understanding would be clear.

The word MYSTERY in the New Testament consistently refers to something that previously was a **divine secret** but now is made known through further revelation. When we speak of a “mystery” - in our common understanding it refers to something that is presently unknown. But as used in the NT is refers to something that was previously unknown but is now revealed. It is a divine secret that can only be known by revelation, but now God is revealing it. So, a mystery in the NT refers to God’s revealed secret which is therefore a secret no more.

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Colossians 1:26 (NKJV)

26 the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.

Again “mystery” in the N.T. refers to that which was formerly hidden and therefore unknown, but is now revealed and therefore known.

Note Christ is talking specifically here about “***the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven***”. In other words, Christ is talking about kingdom truth previously unknown but which is now being revealed in these parables.

The language “***kingdom of heaven***” throughout Matthew refers to God’s Messianic kingdom rule on earth. It is spoken of as the “***kingdom of heaven***” because it is heaven (God) that brings it about. But clearly it is talking about the kingdom the Messiah will set up on earth that was prophesied about in the OT.

This very same language “***kingdom of heaven***” was that which was used by John the Baptist who prepared the way for the Lord (Mt. 3:2). It is the very same language Jesus used when He entered into His ministry (Mt. 4:17). And it is the very same language the disciples used as they went about in Jesus Name performing kingdom sign miracles (Mt. 10:7).

Slide # 12

Matthew 3:2 (NKJV)

2 and saying, “Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand!”

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.”

Matthew 10:7 (NKJV)

7 And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The **kingdom of heaven** is at hand.’

Clearly, by this language the disciples understood Jesus to be talking about the very same Messianic kingdom prophesied in the OT Scriptures. And the Lord never corrected His disciples for holding to the idea of a literal earthly kingdom as foretold in the OT (cf. Matt. 19:28; 20:20-23). At the end of Christ’s earthly ministry, they still had the same idea of a coming earthly kingdom as they did all along (cf. Lk. 24:21). After His resurrection Christ affirmed the idea of a coming literal earthly kingdom as the Jews hoped for as seen in Acts 1:6-7.

So, with all this background in Matthew, with the exact same kingdom language would you then look at Matthew 13:11 and claim it means something completely different? Consistency says you would not do that.

Slide # 13

If the kingdom of the heavens was so defined [as a literal/earthly kingdom] in the preceding portions of Matthew, what is the basis for changing its meaning here? – **Stanley Toussaint**

And the answer is there is no basis for such a change! This is why I say in the matter of proper interpretation let Israel consistently stand for Israel; let the kingdom consistently represent the kingdom consistent with the OT prophets, and the let the Church consistently represent the Church; and in doing so you will be on solid footing with regard to consistent sound doctrine. But if you begin to confuse the kingdom with the Church or the Church with Israel you will be all over the map and there will be much confusion.

Many, even in our basic dispensational camp want to claim that Christ in the parables was now introducing what they like to call “**a mystery form of the kingdom**” otherwise known as a “**spiritual form of the kingdom**”. But that is NOT what the text says. It does not introduce some new SPIRITUAL FORM of the kingdom, but rather reveals NEW truths about the SAME coming kingdom that were previously unrevealed. The same old kingdom hope is in view, but now new insights were being introduced to the true disciples while at the same time being hidden from those hardened to kingdom truth. It’s not a new form of the kingdom being introduced, but rather NEW KINGDOM INSIGHTS.

Some claim this new form of the kingdom now includes both saved and unsaved people, but again that is totally inconsistent. There is no new form of the kingdom and lost people never have any part in the true kingdom at all as consistently brought out by Jesus’ teaching in Matthew (5:3, 10, 20; 6:33; 7:21; 11:11; 18:3).

Slide # 14**Matthew 18:3 (NKJV)**

3 and said, “Assuredly, I say to you, **unless you are converted** and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.

The kingdom means the kingdom and it consistently means the exact same literal/earthly kingdom the prophets prophesied about, and that which Jesus came offering to Israel on the condition of repentance.

But right there is the rub. Israel did not repent and therefore the kingdom offer was withdrawn – therefore they could not go forward into the kingdom.

Remember that both John the Baptist followed by Jesus came on the scene saying, “**Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!**” (Mt. 3:2; 4:17). The kingdom was being offered, but on the condition of repentance. The nation had now as a whole hardened itself under the religious leaders and were not open to repentance.

Therefore, there was a change in the kingdom program at this point as presented by Christ in the form of the parables. These are kingdom parables in Matthew 13 giving further kingdom insight regarding God’s kingdom program going forward.

As we will see in our study going forward a **KEY new insight** at this point as brought out in the parables is that because of the Jews rejection of the kingdom truth there would now be **a DELAY** before the kingdom would be set up. This is the MAJOR point. Whereas, the Jews from the OT Scriptures expected the Messiah to come and immediately usher in the kingdom – there would now be a pause. That was new information. Yes, the OT hinted at it and looking back we can now clearly see it in places like Isaiah 53 but prior to this time it was not clear.

Note the earlier emphasis:

Slide # 15

Matthew 3:2 (NKJV)

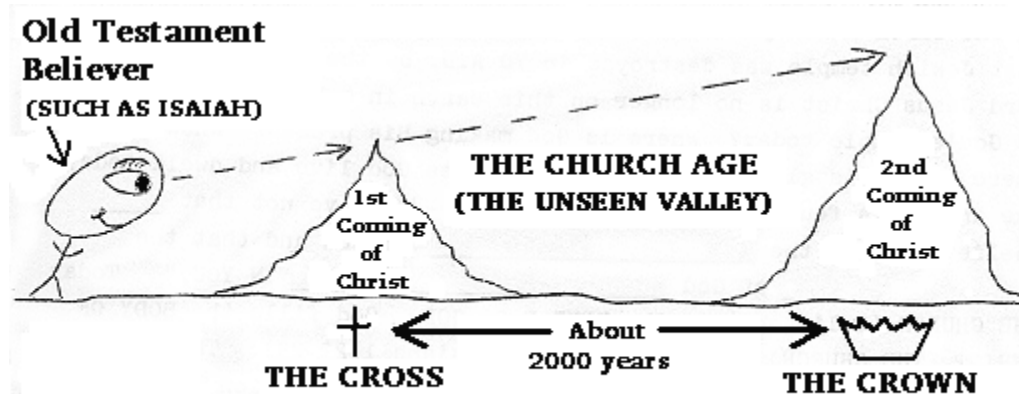
2 and saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven **is at hand!**”

Matthew 4:17 (NKJV)

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven **is at hand.**”

After this time of Christ now speaking to the crowds in parables as seen in Matthew 13 – after this **NEVER again** do we see the kingdom being spoken of as being “**at hand**”. **That offer has now been withdrawn and that is the point of the parables!** Further kingdom insight now shows there is going to be an interim period. And these kingdom parables in Matthew 13 not only show the reality of this delay, but also what will be the nature of this interim period.

The Jews knew full well of the promise of the coming Messiah and that He brings in the kingdom, but they did not know about the two comings. This reality of two comings is a BIG part of this new kingdom insight that Christ was bringing forth in the parables that was hidden from the nation at large.

Slide # 16

You see the Jews did not clearly see the truth of the cross until after the resurrection. They assumed one coming – not two. They assumed if Jesus was the Christ, He was here to set up the kingdom. And yes, that would have been true if Israel would have repented. But they didn't and hence a delay was put in place. This too is part of kingdom truth.

Slide # 17

With hindsight, we now know that there will be two comings of Jesus and that kingdom blessings will be part of His second coming. But the two comings of Jesus was not revealed until Matthew 13.

– *Dr. Michael Vlach*

We are not in the kingdom right now in any form. Of course, God's sovereign reign is always in place – but we are talking about the Messianic kingdom. That is the whole context of Matthew. The Messianic kingdom has been put on hold and we live in a time of interim. And as we know from further revelation the entire Church Age takes place in this interim.

Of course, nothing takes God by surprise. He always knew how Israel would respond. He always knew Christ would go to the cross. He always knew the reality of the coming delay. He always knew the reality of the two comings. That does not change the reality of Christ's legitimate offer of the kingdom as being at hand on the condition of repentance. The offer was legit and was part of God's sovereign plan as was everything else.

Slide # 18

Humanly speaking, the kingdom, instead of being brought in immediately was postponed. From the divine viewpoint, the plan always included what actually happened. The human responsibility remains, however, and the rejection of the kingdom from this standpoint caused the postponement of the promised kingdom on earth. – **John Walvoord**

Footnote: We are not presently in the kingdom but rather are praying for the kingdom to come as Christ taught us to pray (Mt. 6:10). Even though we are not directly “kingdom building” yet kingdom truth has application to us in this sense. We are seeking to win souls who will ultimately be in the kingdom. This is our great role in relation to the coming kingdom.

The whole of history is marching towards the kingdom. And in the end every person will either share in the kingdom or be thrust from it. The great “**kingdom work**” of the Church is sharing the gospel with people who when they believe it become kingdom citizens in the sense that they will share in Christ’s coming kingdom (cf. Col. 1:13). Believers are spoken of as “**the sons of the kingdom**” as seen in Matt. 13:38.

12 For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.

A well established principle in Scripture is that when light is received more light is given, but when people reject the light that is given then even that will be removed. The people of Israel were given a GREAT LIGHT.

Slide 19

Isaiah 9:2 (NKJV)

2 The people who walked in darkness Have seen **a great light**;
Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a **light has shined**.

Matthew 4:16–17 (NKJV)

16 The people who sat in darkness have seen **a great light**, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death **Light has dawned.**”

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, “**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Slide # 20

John 5:35 (NKJV)

35 He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light.

John 12:35–36 (NKJV)

35 Then Jesus said to them, “A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going.

36 While you have the light, believe in the light, that you may become sons of light.” These things Jesus spoke, and departed, and was hidden from them.

Israel definitely had the LIGHT – they had great opportunity to respond to the light, but as of Matthew 13 that door had closed. No more further kingdom truth would be made known to them.

But for the true disciples further kingdom truth in the form of parables in Matthew 13 provides great insight into what is presently going on in the world in relation to God’s kingdom program.

Slide 21

Much that mystifies thoughtful people about the present age is made clear in the mystery parables. – **John Phillips**

There is a principle in Scripture that willful blindness is followed by judicial blindness. We see this in Romans 1 and this pattern is seen throughout the Scriptures. We see it in 2 Thess. 2:10 where God allows the world to be deceived because they do not “receive the love of the truth”.

Because they did not have the love of the truth, they would not get the light of the truth. - **H.C. Woodring**

Conversely those that accept the light, receive more light.

Proverbs 4:18 (NKJV)

18 But the path of the just is like the shining sun, That shines ever brighter unto the perfect day.

13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

Here is the answer to the disciples' question. Christ speaking to them in parables was a form of judgment – because seeing they willfully chose not to see; and hearing; they willfully refused to listen; and consequently, they did not understand.

They saw the sign miracles but refused to acknowledge the truth of what they saw; they heard the profound kingdom teachings but refused to apply it. Therefore, they did not get Jesus or God's kingdom plan. They did not understand Jesus or His message. They liked the healings and the free lunch, they were wowed by His miracles, but their hearts remained hardened not really seeing the truth of Christ as the fulfilment of prophecy.

14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive;

15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.'

Jesus here applies to the people of His day what Isaiah said to the hardened people of his time as recorded in Isa. 6:9-10. Isaiah's message was to a people who were willfully rebellious refusing to hear what they were hearing and refusing to see what they were shown. This was then followed by a statement of judicial hardening where the heart of the people is made dull and their eyes are shut.

This is to be understood against the backdrop of the vineyard analogy in Isaiah 5 where God had done absolutely everything possible for His people to bring forth good fruit. But in response they had brazenly gone into apostasy as the remainder of Isaiah 5 so vividly shows. It's not that God wanted to HARDEN them; this rather was the consequence of prolonged rebellion and resistance against God. And so also was it in the time of Jesus!

There comes a point where God lets people go, and in that sense, He hardens them. He gives them over to their own devices (cf. Rom. 1). A deliberate refusal to listen to God eventuates in the inability to hear or respond.

One can become so calloused that one reaches the point of no return (cf. Heb. 6, 10). This becomes an irremediable situation. This reflects the national judgment in Isaiah's time which Christ then applied to the people of His day.

The hardened condition addressed by Isaiah became indicative of the people of Israel during the time of Christ and is therefore applied to the nation of Israel six times in the NT.

Slide # 22

N.T. texts that quote Isa. 6:9-10

Matt. 13:13-15

Mark 4:10-12

Luke 8:10

Jn. 12:39-41

Acts 28:26-27

Romans 11:8

It is noteworthy that the application of Isaiah 6:9-10 describes the spiritual condition of the people before Christ spoke the parables, not as a result of Him sharing the parables. The condition reflected in the parables is merely descriptive. The parables are in relation to divine judgement upon Israel because of the already hardened condition of their hearts.

The spiritually responsive were never denied the truth; the invitation to receive Christ was always open, clear, and uncomplicated. It was those who had hardened their hearts against Christ who were being dealt with in parables on this occasion. – **Howard Vos**

Note that word "**hearts**" in verse 15. At core the problem was that these people had a HEART problem reflected in their willful ignorance – they refused to see what they saw – they refused to listen to what they heard. Jesus was not the type of Messiah they expected or wanted and so they were not open to the truth of Him – even though it aligned perfectly with the prophetic Scriptures and the witness of the Spirit.

The nation at large had essentially hardened their hearts against the truth of Christ, but Jesus still held out an invitation to those individuals who were still in the balance so to speak. He invites the heavy laden to come to Him (11:28). In 12:30 He warns that to not be with Him is to be against Him.

One cannot sit on the fence. The challenge was to respond to the light given lest they be hardened which was indicative of the nation as a whole.

Matthew 13 presents the HARD lesson that while we have the light we need to respond to it. I call this “***the light of conviction***” (cf. Ezek. 33:11; Jn. 16:8-11; Acts 6:10; 7:51; Heb. 6:4-6; 2 Pet. 2:20).

If we don't respond to the light of conviction then there comes a point where it will be withdrawn and the person will descend into even greater darkness. Heb. 3:7-8 says, “***Therefore, as the Holy says: ‘Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...’***”. Or as Paul says do “***not receive the grace of God vain***” saying, “***Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation.***” (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

People often say these fatal words: “I’ll do it later, not now...”

I once talked to a young man of about twenty-two who told me that. He said he believed in God and in Christ intellectually and believed that the Bible was true and someday planned to accept Christ as his Savior. But first, he said, “I’ve got a lot of living to do.”

I remonstrated with him for some time but finally when I saw that I could not persuade him, I let him go, reminding him that the Bible says that he who, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be cut off and that without remedy.

A week later I heard that he was driving down the highway about seventy miles an hour when a truck stopped in front of him with a tailgate down. He was instantly decapitated.

I remembered the words that I had spoken to him. “He that hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be cut off and that without remedy.

-James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion, p. 97

No wonder Jesus said, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*” In many respects this was the last call to those who were in danger of hardening themselves against the truth to the point of no return.

Now is the accepted time. Now is the day of salvation. Tomorrow may forever be too late.

Indeed, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”