

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 writes to show the Jews that Jesus is their Messiah King as prophesied about in the OT. This Messiah would be a Davidic descendant who is both Lord-God and human. He would be both Deliverer and Ruler.

The first 10 chapters of Matthew present various lines of evidence showing Jesus to be the true Messiah. But then in chapters 11-12 we have the nation of Israel rejecting Christ as their Messiah. He claimed to be “**Lord even of the Sabbath**” (12:8) but the religious leaders accredited His power to Satan and not to God (12:24-32). Jesus then turned from an emphasis on revealing Himself to the nation, to PERSONAL conversion saying in Matt. 11:28, “**Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest**” and in Matt. 12:50, “**whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.**”

The rejection by the nation, as led by the religious leaders, was met with a change of ministry by Christ. He then began to teach in parables which was a form of judicial judgment. The parables concealed further kingdom truth from the fickle crowds rejecting Him and at the same time revealed it to true kingdom disciples.

Slide # 2

First Coming



Kingdom Offered

*Kingdom Truth
related to Kingdom Delay*
Matthew 13 Parables
[**Kingdom Delayed.....**]

Second Coming



Kingdom Come

Co-Mingled Condition:
True kingdom children
& false kingdom professors

Slide # 3

Matthew 13 – Key New Kingdom Insights in the Parables

- 1) True kingdom citizens are those who receive the Word with an “honest and good heart” and bear fruit with perseverance.
- 2) The inauguration of the kingdom has been DELAYED.
- 3) During the time of DELAY God is still building a kingdom people but there are also many false professors and God will sort it all out in the end.

Some have asked me about fruit. We are not saved by fruit but by faith alone. However, true faith brings forth fruit. Kingdom people bring forth kingdom fruit. You might ask what is this fruit?

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[Brian] Vickers aptly notes that the fruit of the Spirit is linked to the kingdom [cf. Rom. 14:17]: “It could justly be called the ‘fruit of the kingdom’”. In my estimation this is true because of the close connection between the New Covenant and the kingdom. (emphasis mine) – **Dr. Michael Vlach**

I would concur – kingdom fruit is essentially the fruit of the Spirit.

And if a person truly has the Spirit (which all kingdom people now do) that is going to make a difference in your life starting with a fundamental change of nature (the new nature) which is now wed to the Spirit. This then works its way out in your life as a process. We are born immature, but then we grow in relationship to the truth we have come to accept. Yes, believers can and do stumble, but God disciplines all of His children without exception to build holiness into their lives (cf. Heb. 12).

We now come to the concluding 7th and 8th parables in Matthew 13. And they continue on with the MAIN theme of who will and who won't ultimately be in the kingdom. That is the ultimate issue in these parables. The time of kingdom delay is ultimately about who will in the future go into the kingdom. Many will outwardly join the "kingdom movement" but in the end only the true believers will be shown to be true sons of the kingdom and only they will go in.

Remember that the parables of Matthew 13 are thematically introduced at the end of chapter 12 with Jesus saying this in Matt. 12:50...

Slide # 5

Matthew 12:50 (NKJV)

50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."

This leads into the parables that drive home the MAIN point of who is ultimately going to go into the kingdom and who is not. Jesus makes the issue PERSONAL relationship with Him, and it is a Lordship relationship that does the will of the Father. This defines true kingdom people – not perfectly but directionally as a way of life.

Keep in mind that the Church Age is not the Messianic kingdom. All true believers in the Church Age are headed for the kingdom, but the Church is not the kingdom. The Messianic kingdom is yet future and will be inaugurated at the Second Coming of Christ. Yet, during this time God is continuing to build for the kingdom and people who get saved are kingdom citizens who will share in the future kingdom.

Even though we are not in the kingdom, God is still working out His kingdom purposes during this age. Everything is moving towards the kingdom. It is the goal towards which the whole of history is moving with the ultimate issue of who will be there when it arrives.

We now pick our study up at Matthew 13:47...

Matthew 13:47–52 (NKJV)

47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind,

Note the word, “**Again**”. There is overlapping repetition here for emphasis. This seventh parable is very similar in emphasis to the parable of the wheat and the tares and in effect summarizes the main ideas of the entire chapter. Like the first two parables, which are the leading parables, it too is interpreted by the Lord as recorded here in the chapter.

Note that all 3 of these leading parables which were all interpreted by the Lord have the main issue of who in the end is saved and will go into the kingdom. This is the main idea in the parable of the sower and the soils, of the wheat and the tares, and also here in the parable of the dragnet. This is the BIG idea in all the parables of Matthew 13.

Once again note the language is one of illustration making some connection to kingdom truth – saying, “***the kingdom of heaven is like***”. Again, it is not saying we are in the kingdom, but rather making application of kingdom truth as it applies to the time of delay – the period between Christ’s first coming and His second coming.

During the time of delay “kingdom truth” continues to go forward. After His resurrection Acts 1:3 says this of Jesus...

Slide # 6

Acts 1:3 (NKJV)

3 to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

Jesus still has the kingdom as the ultimate goal in view. And kingdom truth had application for these disciples who would be the leaders in the early church.

But note this carefully, a few verses later we find the apostles wanting to know about the timing of kingdom restoration, and Jesus said this:

Slide # 7

Acts 1:6–7 (NKJV)

6 Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

7 And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority.

The kingdom is still future – it is still coming – it is the ultimate goal. The apostles wanted to know the TIMING, but Jesus said it was not for them to know. It will arrive at the time of His Second Coming of which no one knows the day or the hour (cf. Mt. 24:36).

In the meantime – during the time of kingdom delay God’s kingdom program continues on in dragnet form. There is a large outward collection of kingdom professors that develops. They are caught in the “kingdom net” (so to speak) claiming to belong to the kingdom. They heard the kingdom message and claim to be a part of the “kingdom movement” – claiming to believe in Christ as Lord.

During the time of delay there develops a massive outward “kingdom movement” as already noted in the parable of the mustard seed. And as noted this movement becomes thoroughly leavened (or thoroughly compromised) in the process. This parable of the dragnet is illustrating essentially this same truth.

In view is the BIG umbrella of what is commonly called “Christendom” consisting of all who claim to be followers of Christ – all who claim to have part in the kingdom.

The dragnet is the BIG NET of the kingdom movement that catches all kinds of “fish” (people) prior to the arrival of the actual kingdom.

Living on the sea of Galilee the people were very familiar with fishing. Some fishing was done with a line and a hook, some was done with a small net, but the dragnet in view was a very large net that required a team of fisherman to operate. This net could cover up to a half square mile as it was pulled around in a giant circle around the fish between two boats or tethered to the shore and maneuvered by a single boat working off the shore.

The sea in Scripture often symbolizes the world and the kingdom movement driven by the kingdom message is pictured by this large dragnet (cf. Dean. 7:3, 17).

Observe the emphasis on “**every kind**” in the phrase “**gathered some of every kind**”. This is very similar to the parable of the wheat and tares in that the good and the bad are initially co-mingled before being separated out in the final judgment.

48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away.

The “kingdom NET” (as it were) collects a lot of fish and the different kinds of fish are described here as the good and the bad. The bad fish would have been considered UNCLEAN. In Lev. 11:9-12 some fish were considered clean and some were unclean. The word “bad” (Gk. *sapros*) can mean “decayed” or “worthless”.

Various images in the parables depict the same reality – namely that believers and unbelievers will be separated prior to the establishment of the kingdom. There will be no unbelievers allowed to initially go into the kingdom. Only believers at the coming of Christ will go into the kingdom.

Slide # 8

Matthew 3:12 (NKJV)

12 His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and **gather His wheat into the barn**; but He will **burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.**”

Just as the chaff will be separated from the wheat, likewise the separation of the bad fish from the good fish represents the ultimate separation of the unbeliever from the believer (cf. Mt. 8:12).

49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just,

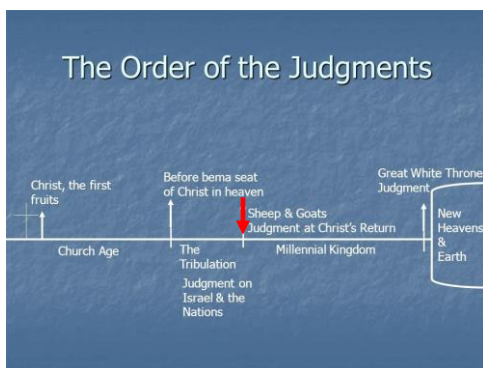
Here Christ interprets the parable.

The parable of the wheat and tares emphasizes the coexistence of believers and unbelievers during the time of kingdom delay, while this parable of the dragnet emphasizes that in the end there will be a separation of the unbeliever from the believer with emphasis on what will happen to the unbeliever.

Note that in the parable of the wheat and tares the harvest is said to come at the “**end of the age**” as seen in verses 39 and 40; and here in verse 49 we have the separation of the wicked from the just also said to happen “at the **end of the age**”. The end of the age in verses 39-40 is connected to the establishment of the kingdom as seen in verses 41 and 43.

The order is this: Christ at His Second Coming comes in judgment where all that are offend are removed and then He sets up His kingdom in very close succession.

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Observe once again the distinction is characterized by practice. The bad fish are described as “wicked” while the good fish are said to be “just” (or righteous). This corresponds to the tares being described as those “who practice lawlessness” (v. 41) and the wheat as those who are “righteous (v. 43); and again the tares as “sons of the wicked one” (v. 38), while the wheat are said to be “the sons of the kingdom (v. 38).

Thus, there is a consistent emphasis on good fruit for those who will go into the kingdom.

50 and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

This is the ultimate destination of “bad” fish who are the wicked. They were in the same “kingdom NET” in terms of profession, but when sorted out they are proven to be unbelievers and are cast into the furnace of fire which is a description of hell. This is the same fate that awaits the tares as described by Christ in the earlier parable.

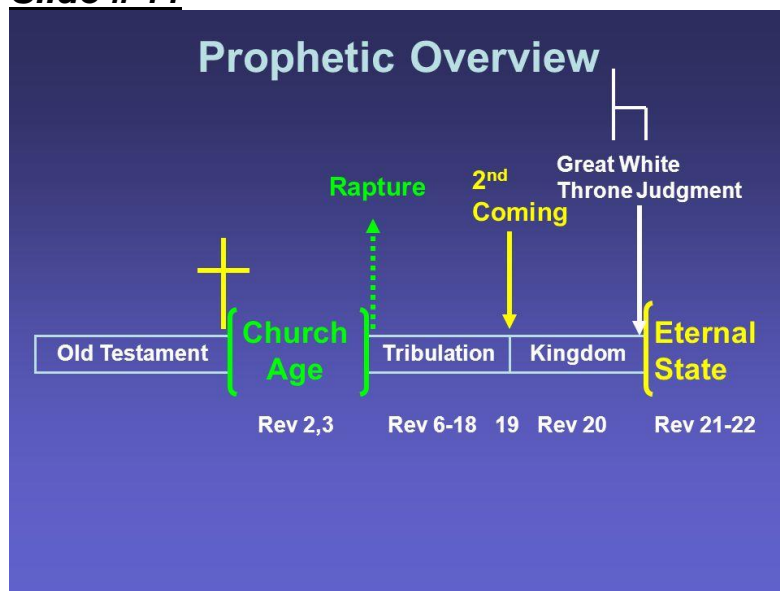
Slide # 10

Matthew 13:42 (NKJV)

42 and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Again, the destiny of the good and the bad fish is the ultimate issue. And special emphasis is here made on the destiny of bad fish as being in a “**furnace of fire**” where there is ongoing misery described as “**wailing and gnashing of teeth**”. This is commonly what we call hell!

The Bible teaches that without Christ people who die first go to a place called HADES. Hades is the realm of departed spirits. The torment section of Hades is a temporary holding place where the lost are held as they await the final judgment before the Great White Throne which takes place after the millennial reign of Christ.

Slide # 11**Slide # 12****Revelation 20:15 (NKJV)**

15 And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

This is the ultimate destiny of all the lost – the lake of fire. Christ described it here in Matthew 13 as “the furnace of fire” (cf. 42, 50; Matt. 8:11-12; 25:31-46). Note the graphic way Christ described this place – as a furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. That is a picture of constant torment, misery, and pain.

People in this life often experience great pain - and lingering pain is terrible. And when we are in pain we long for relief. Perhaps it can be numbed by drugs or helped with surgery. Whatever the case, we look for relief and give a sigh of relief once the pain begins to subside.

But HELL is pictured as a place where there is never any relief – only ongoing/unending torment and painful misery forever and ever and ever.

Slide # 13

Revelation 20:10 (NKJV)

10 The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

Christ spoke more about hell than anyone else in the Bible. Christ spoke more about hell than He did about heaven. Why? Well, simply because He doesn't anyone to go there. In Ezekiel 33:11 God says, "***I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked***". In 1 Tim. 2:4 it says God, "***desires all men to be saved***", and in 2 Pet. 3:9 it says God is "***not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.***"

In Matthew 25:41 it says the everlasting fire was "***prepared for the devil and his angels***". The emphasis is that it wasn't even essentially prepared for people but rather for the devil and his angels. But tragically all the lost will join the devil and his angels there for all eternity. It is a horrifying doctrine almost too horrible to comprehend!

Slide # 14

Matthew 25:46 (ESV)

46 And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

There is no middle ground. There is no purgatory. And there is no second chance. **Hebrews 9:27 says, "it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"**.

Slide # 15

The dragnet of God's judgment moves silently through the sea of mankind and draws all men to the shores of eternity for final separation to their ultimate destiny – believers to eternal life and unbelievers to eternal damnation. – **John MacArthur**

Most people don't perceive the great "kingdom work" that God is doing in the world today. Most people are oblivious to the coming kingdom issue and eternity! But anyone who has rightly heard the word of the kingdom can't say they haven't been warned. The warning of Christ here is very strong!

51 Jesus said to them, "Have you understood all these things?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

If the master teacher asks you if you got His teaching, I think it would be very human to want to say, "**Yes, Lord**". Clearly, they still had much to learn but evidently they had gotten the basic idea of what Christ was teaching because Christ didn't correct them and because of what He then goes on to say in the next verse.

The word "understood" (Gk. *sumiemi*) literally means "**putting together**". So, the question was whether or not they were putting together the new kingdom insights that Christ was presenting in the parables. It was like asking them if they got it.

But note that Christ essentially lumped "**all these things**" closely together as implied in this single question. It seems that the MAIN points He was wanting to make were consistently overlapping as brought out in all these parables. It seems there is basic continuity in what is being emphasized – namely the issue of kingdom delay, the condition of the coexistence of true and false believers during this time, and that it will all be sorted out in the end.

52 Then He said to them, "Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

This is the 8th and final parable in the chapter. It too uses the language "**the kingdom of heaven is like**". But this parable comes at the conclusion of all the other parables and in essence is an "application parable". Since Christ has just asked if they understood "**all these things**" it appears this parable is now making application in terms of what Christ wants them to do with this newfound kingdom information.

The word "scribe" (Gk. *grammateus*) literally referred to one who wrote. However, Scribes were biblical scholars who were also known as interpreters and teachers of God's truth.

In effect, Jesus here calls His disciples “**scribes**”. They were those who now had special kingdom insight as He had just given it to them in the parables. Remember that earlier in the chapter Jesus had said this:

Slide # 16

Matthew 13:11 (NKJV)

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.

Everyone who has come to know the full truth of the kingdom is like a householder (or homeowner) who brings out his treasure things new and things old.

The head of the household had the responsibility to provide for the welfare of his house out of the supplies that he possessed. He kept these things in store and then as needed would bring them out and dispense them appropriately.

These disciples were now (by virtue of their knowledge) in a position to dispense the treasures of kingdom truth which were now in their possession. These treasures of kingdom insight would include both new things and old things – both kingdom insights from the OT and new kingdom insights as brought out in the Matthew 13 parables.

And this requires discernment and properly dividing the word of truth regarding what is old and what is new.

Slide # 17

2 Timothy 2:15 (NKJV)

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**

Slide # 18

Matthew 13 does not transform the nature of the kingdom presented in the OT, but it does present new truths about its timing and how it relates to this age. – ***Dr. Michael Vlach***

The mention of both the new and the old is significant. Jesus is not just restating old information already given in the OT nor is He only giving brand new information that relates to the kingdom. He is doing both! He is bringing together a proper mixture of both that unites the whole of kingdom program in a unified whole – properly understood.

Yes, there is information about the Messianic kingdom as already stated in the OT, but there is also new kingdom insights not previously revealed. The kingdom prophesied in the OT would indeed be established some day (old revelation) but not at the first coming of the Messiah (new revelation). The idea that there would be an intervening age of co-mingling between the first coming of the Messiah and His Second coming was brand new information.

However, a delay in the official inauguration of the kingdom at Messiah's second coming does not mean there is no kingdom connection with the time period in between. During this delay time God is in effect sifting out of the nations a kingdom people. In this process lots of people gather under the broad "kingdom umbrella" but in the end God will sort it all out and only the true kingdom children will go into the kingdom.

Slide # 19

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. ... Pentecost puts it, "*what the Old Testament had not revealed was that an entire age would intervene between the offer of the kingdom by the Messiah and Israel's reception 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.

– **Dr. Michael Vlach**

The reason Jesus did not set up His kingdom at His first coming is because Israel did not repent and accept Him as their Messiah-Lord. They did not legitimately recognize Him as being of God and in fact God of very God. They did not see Him as Messiah-God as prophesied in the OT.

Peter picking up on this shows that before the Messiah can come and bring about the kingdom Israel must first come to repentance.

Slide # 20

Acts 3:19–21 (NKJV)

19 Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord,

20 and **that He may send Jesus Christ**, who was preached to you before,

21 whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began.

We know from the rest of the Scriptures that Israel will not come to true repentance until they are in the 70th week of Daniel (the Tribulation Period) dealt with at length in the book of Revelation. Under the crucible of the Tribulation Period with the whole world rallied against them, Israel will finally come to the place of repentance and call upon the name of the LORD – call upon Jesus as their Messiah to come and deliver them. And then He will!

Slide # 21

Old Kingdom Truth

- The Messiah will come and bring in the kingdom.
- Israel would receive the Kingdom.
-

New Kingdom Truth

- There is now going to be a time of kingdom ***delay***.
- Citizenship in the kingdom is dependent upon having a ***personal Lordship relationship with Jesus***.
- Only a ***remnant*** of those who hear will become kingdom citizens as evidenced in them bearing genuine fruit.
- The time of delay will involve a ***co-mingling*** of false professors and true possessors.
- The outward form of kingdom professors will ***grow large*** but at the same time become thoroughly ***leavened*** with compromise.
- Those who possess the kingdom ***see the value*** of it and ***“sell all”*** to ***“buy in”*** and attain it.
- God’s kingdom program during the time of delay involves the gathering of a great mixture of true and false converts that ***in the end God through the angels will sort out***.
- Proper kingdom understanding involves ***rightly dividing*** previous kingdom truth (OT) and new kingdom truth (the parables).

The grand scheme of redemption history is all moving toward the kingdom. It is the GRAND scheme in the whole of Scripture.

It was prophesied about in the OT. Christ came the first time and offered it to Israel on the condition of repentance, but they did not receive Him (Jn. 1:11).

The kingdom offer was then withdrawn and has now been put on hold awaiting Israel to come to repentance.

However, God's kingdom program still continues on in the sense that He is still building a kingdom people that will ultimately inherit the kingdom. In the time of delay this is the great thing God is doing in the world. He is saving a kingdom people that will one day share in the kingdom. This overlaps with the truth of the Church. All who are a part of Christ's Church family will one day share in the kingdom and rule with Christ

So, while it is true that we are "***building for the kingdom***" we are not presently building the kingdom. The kingdom itself is yet future and only the Messiah can bring in the kingdom. Our mission is all about SOULS who will eventually be in the kingdom!

Christ taught us to pray for the kingdom to come (Mt. 6:10). He taught us to seek the kingdom first (Mt. 6:33). All our service is ultimately about building ***for*** the kingdom.

Slide # 22

1 Thessalonians 2:12 (NKJV)

12 that you would walk worthy of God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.

In heaven when Christ takes the scroll (representing the title deed of the earth) all of heaven gets excited. The Church at that point after the rapture is represented as being there and here is what they do.

Slide # 23

Revelation 5:9–10 (NKJV)

9 And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain, And have redeemed

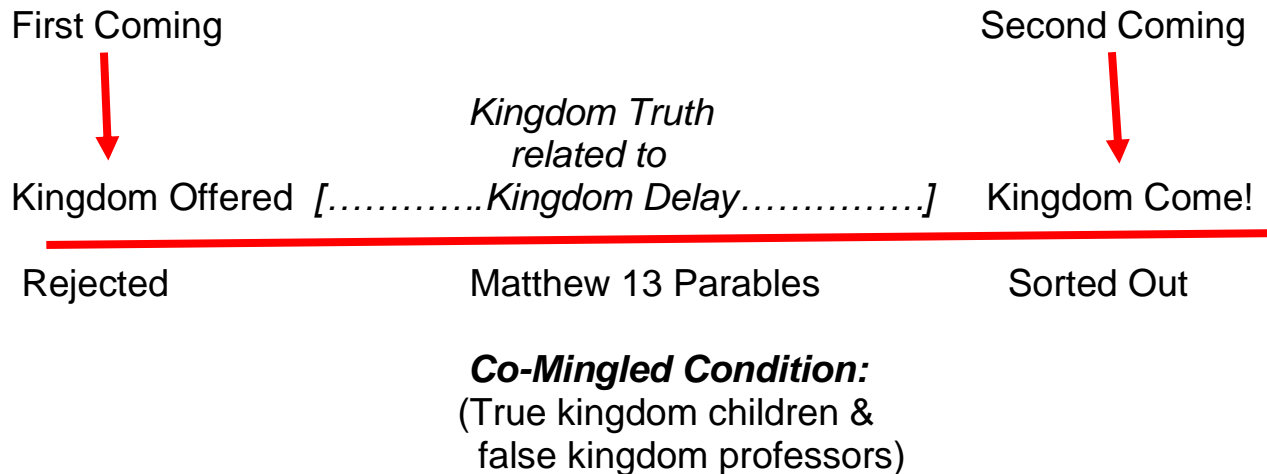
us to God by Your blood Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

10 And have made us kings and priests to our God; And we shall reign on the earth.”

We live between the two coming of Christ – during the time of kingdom delay when the invitation is going forth for people to become future kingdom citizens. Many profess to be believers in Christ and thereby kingdom citizens, but there are MANY who fall on bad ground and bear no good fruit proving they are not genuine; there are MANY tares who are counterfeits; there are many bad fish who in the end will all be sorted out – gathered out of the kingdom and cast into the furnace of fire.

In contrast the true sons of the kingdom will shine forth in the kingdom and experience kingdom joy that is more valuable than anything else that could be offered.

Side # 24 – Overview of God’s Kingdom Program...



Evangelistically, Christ warns, “**He who has ears to hear, let him hear!**” (v. 9, 43).

To the true disciple who knows kingdom truth Christ in effect says share the treasure of your kingdom truth rightly dividing the new and the old.

Christ made it very clear. In the end there will be those who go into the kingdom and there will be those who are cast into the furnace of fire where there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

In the end when the kingdom comes where will you be? Where you are with Christ will determine where you will be!

Christ invites all to come to Him and He will give you rest (Mt. 11:28). He says whoever does the will of the Father is His brother, sister, mother (Mt. 12:50). It is not enough to merely say “**Lord, Lord**” – to Jesus, it must be real as evidenced by doing the will of the Father (cf. Mt. 7:21-23).

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. It must be a heart commitment. “Ya gotta wanna!”

Revelation 22:17 (NKJV)

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

As Savior Jesus died for all your sins – as Lord over all He arose again the third day. True believers believe on Him as Savior and Lord and to them belongs the kingdom.

Jesus told Nicodemus that unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3). This is the ultimate issue! And how does this happen, well Jesus went on to say in John 3:16 that whoever believes in Him will not perish but has everlasting life.

Slide # 25

John 1:11–12 (NKJV)

11 He came to His own, and His own **did not receive Him**.

12 But **as many as received Him**, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who **believe in His name**:

13 who were **born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God**.

In your mind I want you to back up for just a moment and get the BIG PICTURE emphasis of Matthew to this point.

Matthew begins by emphasizing the virgin Mary is going to have a baby who will be named Jesus and He shall be called Immanuel which means “**God with us**” (Mt. 1:21-23).

Then as the forerunner John the Baptist went before Him he came as a herald crying out “**Prepare the way of the LORD**” as he called the people to repentance (Mt. 3:3). This was about THE LORD – YHWH – the Messiah who is the LORD and in repentance accepting Him for Who He is. That was the whole point of John the Baptist’s ministry!

Jesus then demonstrated His Messianic Lordship over nature, over disease, and over demons building to Matthew 12 where Jesus went so far as to declare Himself “**Lord even of the Sabbath**” (Mt. 12:8).

The nation of Israel rejected Christ’s Messianic Lordship claims. And this is where the parables come in. As the massive fickle crowds were following Him, Christ made it clear in the Matthew 13 parables that not everyone outwardly following is going into the kingdom. That is the point!

Only the genuine believers – only the true followers – only those who really know Christ as Lord are going into the kingdom. Massive crowds are deceptive as illustrated in the parables. Only the good ground that bears fruit, only the wheat, only those who “sell all” and “buy in” with Christ, only the good fish are going into the kingdom. Only those who truly know Jesus as Lord are going into the kingdom! That is the MAJOR point of the parables!

No one can be neutral about Jesus.

Matthew 12:30 (NKJV)

30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

Either Jesus is a swear word, or He is the most highly exalted and revered Person in the universe. The most probing question in the world is this:

WHO IS JESUS TO YOU?

Today many are calling themselves ex-Christians proving they were never Christians to begin with. Other are embracing what is called “progressive Christianity” that is a form of godliness but yet denies the Lordship life-changing authority of Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 3:5).

Multitudes of others in the BIG tent of Christendom have various nominal expressions of Christianity from Catholic, to Amish, to cultic and lots of stuff in between. All of these in general represent a leavened form kingdom followers that in truth are bogus!

Only a true life-changing faith that recognizes Christ as personal Lord and Savior will get you to the kingdom.

So I ask you again – the most important question ever put to you...

Who is Jesus to you?

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved (Acts 16:31).