



## World Christian Fellowship

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### Introduction to Matthew 13

**Matthew 13:1-2**, *On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. <sup>2</sup>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.*

**Matthew 13<sup>th</sup> chapter** opens us to a new perspective in our Lord's ministry.

Matthew's gospel primary purpose is to present Jesus Christ as the King, the Son of God, the Messiah, the rightful heir to David's throne.

**Matthew chapter 1** showing Jesus as the one who should reign because He was in the Messianic line. He is indeed the son of David.

**Matthew chapter 2**, Jesus' right to reign was affirmed by the Magi from the east as kingmakers in their own understanding of prophecy and through the direction of the Spirit of God, were led to confirm that this was the King.

**Matthew chapter 3** Jesus is affirmed by the testimony of John the Baptist who was the foreordained forerunner to the King.

**Matthew chapter 4**, the King was attested to by His conflict with Satan. Jesus overpowered Satan, conquering the kingdom of darkness, was a clear testimony to the fact that He was God's chosen anointed King. For only God's King could overcome Satan.

Christ was affirmed in a positive way in chapters 1 to 3.

Christ was affirmed in a negative way in chapter 4 as the King.

**Matthew chapter 5 to 7** King speaks with authority and gave the principles of His kingdom in that great Sermon on the Mount.

**Matthew chapter 8 to 10** the credentials of the King. There are His miracles, three chapters full of miracles. They are the prophesied credentials. Again, He proves Himself to be the King in His supernatural power.

Parallel with His credentials in **chapters 8 to 10** is a mounting, ascending rejection.

The greater the evidence that He is the King, the greater the rejection, which shows the profound blindness of the people.

**Matthew chapter 11** Jesus denounces the sinful nation of Israel for rejecting Him. He promises them severe judgment.

The King Jesus closes **Matthew 11** with an invitation. *“Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”*

So, out of the message of judgment comes again the message of grace, an invitation.

**Matthew chapter 12**, rejection reaches its climax, and the pronouncement of judgment reaches its climax as well. Their final rejection is summed up in the fact that they accuse Jesus of being Satanic.

Jesus then pronounces a final judgment on the leaders and says, *“You are beyond the point of being forgiven.”*

**Chapter 12** closes with another invitation. **Matthew 12:50**, *“For whosoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother.”*

**What was the will of the Father in heaven?**

Father had said, *“This is My beloved Son, hear Him.”*

Whoever recognized Jesus as the Son of God and whoever heard His message would come into an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

So, Christ has been proven to be the King.

The people have rejected Him as the King.

He has pronounced judgment on them and yet offers an invitation to whoever will believe.

As we approach chapter 13,

- Israel has rejected the King.
- Israel, therefore, has rejected the kingdom because you cannot separate the kingdom from the King.

For centuries they had awaited the Messiah.

For centuries they had awaited the establishment of God's kingdom on earth.

They had awaited the times of refreshing, the restoration, the granting back of the glory and the blessing that was man's before the fall.

When it was offered to them, they refused it and they lost it in that generation.

As we approach chapter 13, we enter a new dimension, a new perspective in the ministry of Christ.

Not seeing the Messiahship of Jesus in His words and works, they have separated the fruit from the tree.

- It is not that they denied His miracles,
- it is not that they were not fascinated by His words,
- it is not that they were not aware of His power,
- it is that they never traced the fruit to its logical conclusion.

They separated it from the reality of who He was.

**Matthew 12:14**, *Then the Pharisees went out and plotted against Him, how they might destroy Him.*

Already they had sought to destroy Him.

They had reached the point of wanting only to kill Him.

They have rejected the King.

They have rejected His kingdom.

Now, the question that immediately comes into our mind is that If Jesus came to offer the kingdom, if Jesus came to bring His kingdom to earth, to reign and to rule and to establish that which was promised, and they refused Him and His kingdom, what then happened to the kingdom?

**What happens now?**

Question answered by chapter 13.

The kingdom cannot come until the nation of Israel receives the King.

At this point, the kingdom had to be postponed in terms of its full fulfilment.

Because they rejected the King, the kingdom in its full fulfilment had to be postponed. It had to be postponed to a future time.

### **What time?**

The second coming of Christ.

This is the reason why Christ is coming a second time, to bring the kingdom that was refused the first time.

- The message of **John the Baptist**, His forerunner, *“Repent for the kingdom is at hand.”*
- **Jesus** came and His message was this, *“Repent for the kingdom is at hand.”*
- The message of the **Apostles, Acts10:7**, was the same.

The kingdom of God.

They were preaching the kingdom.

The people said no to the King and to the kingdom and the kingdom therefore was postponed.

## **Why didn't God just eliminate it altogether?**

Because God made a promise to Israel.

- ✓ God keeps His promises.
- ✓ God is a God of His Word.

If God just set the kingdom aside and said, "Forget it" and dropped it, then his prophecies would not come to pass, and His Word would be violated.

So, it is postponed until they believe.

**Zechariah 12:10**, *And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn.*

They will be redeemed.

There's coming a day when they look on the one, they have pierced. They will have a fountain of cleansing opened to them. They will be redeemed.

Paul says that all Israel will be saved.

We know that's to come, and the time known as the great tribulation.

**Revelation 7:9-10**, *After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands,<sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

We see the nation of Israel redeemed.

We have worldwide Gentile salvation and when the kingdom of God comes into the hearts of men, internally. Then it will realize its full fulfilment, externally, as Christ reigns on the earth for a thousand years in the millennium, spoken of in **Revelation 20**.

Full fulfilment of the kingdom means that kingdom which comes to pass on the earth both internally, that is in the hearts of believing people, and externally, as Christ rules and reigns as King on the earth.

There was a remnant who received the King internally.

**But what happens in the middle?**

## **What happens between now and then?**

This is the period that some theologians have called,

**“The Parenthesis.”**

**“The Interim.”**

**“Interregnum.”**

But it is a period that is not seen in the Old Testament. Jesus calls it the mystery, which was hidden from time past. They didn't see this period of time.

That's why you must have chapter 13 because they had no teaching on what it would be like.

So, in chapter 13, we have **8 parables**.

Jesus describes the interim period.

He describes that parenthesis in which we live.

This so profound for us, because if we can understand what Jesus says about this period, then we can understand what He wants us to do in this period.

We need to understand chapter 13 because it's talking about our period.

What it will be like when the King has been rejected and the kingdom postponed until He comes again to set up His kingdom.

Each of the parables discovers another facet of this period.

Now, we call this the mystery form of the kingdom.

It is not a clandestine secretive thing. Mystery simply means something that was hidden and is now revealed.

They didn't see in the Old Testament. This was something they didn't know. They only saw the Messiah coming and setting up His kingdom.

Now there were a few subtle little hints that there might be something going on in there, but they never got a description of it.

They just saw the Messiah coming and establishing His kingdom internally and externally. They didn't see this period.

So, we call it the mystery form, that which was hidden from the past. When the kingdom goes on with the King being absent.

At this point Jesus is in heaven.

Though He is not present in our midst, but in terms of where He identifies Himself biblically, glorified body, He dwells with the Father at the right-hand interceding for us in heaven. He is awaiting the time to return to earth.

So, there is a sense in which this is the kingdom with the King in absentia. You cannot have a kingdom if the King isn't here. But that is not the case.

There is a realm here and there are people here who are subjects of Christ, and Christ is the King by definition of who He is, though He is in absentia.

#### **Classic illustration in David.**

David was still the king of Israel even when Absalom rejected him, even when Absalom's revolutionary cohorts rejected him. Even when they chased him into the wilderness, and he hid for his life for a long period of time. David was still the king, Israel was still his realm, he still had the right to rule. He was still the recognized monarch in the hearts of many of the people.

There was a day when he came back to take up the throne that was rightfully his.

Christ in that sense is the King in absentia.

**Matthew 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter** then describes this period of time, when the Lord Jesus Christ is ruling on the earth, though He Himself personally in His glorified form is absent.

Understand the concept of the kingdom.

**God's Kingdom is universal.**

God's universal kingdom. God rules everything and everyone forever.

- ✓ God is the sovereign,
- ✓ God is the creator,
- ✓ God is the sustainer,
- ✓ God is the beginning and
- ✓ God is the end of all things.
- ✓ God dominates all things.

He rules over everything and everyone forever.

**Psalm 29:10,** *The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood,  
And the Lord sits as King forever.*

God is then eternally the King.

There is no time when He is not the King, and there is no time when someone else takes His place. He is the King forever.

**Psalm 103:19**, *The Lord has established His throne in heaven,  
And His kingdom rules over all.*

God is not only the King forever, but He is the King over everything.

**What about the devil?**

God is the King over the devil.

**What about the demons?**

God is King over the demons.

**What about the unbelievers?**

God is the King over them.

That's why God has the power to throw them all into hell.

**Matthew 10:28**, *And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

God is the King of hell.

Hell is not run by Satan.

Satan is punished in hell along with all the others.

God runs hell just like He runs everything else from the viewpoint of His universal monarchy.

God is the King over everything and everybody forever.

**1 Chronicles 29:11-12**, *Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, And You are exalted as head over all. <sup>12</sup>Both riches and honour come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all.*

- ✓ God is the King.
- ✓ God is the universal King.

So that the first perception we need to have of the kingdom of God is that which gives us His universal rule over everything and everybody forever.

### **Mediatorial Kingdom.**

It is not the direct rule of God. it is mediated through some other agency, through some other individual or individuals.

it refers to God's rule on earth. It is directly referring to God's rule on earth.

**Matthew 6:10**, *Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven.*

The universal kingdom of God be mediated through the believers on earth perceives the earthly mediated kingdom of God.

God, rule on the earth the way You rule everywhere else.

So that the earth somehow is isolated in the midst of God's universal kingdom as a point of rebellion.

It is the only point, where the rebellion is focused, in the universe.

"God, rule on earth as You rule everywhere else in Your universe." This brings us to the perspective of the mediated kingdom.

In God's great glorious universal kingdom there is a little tiny stage of rebellion.

When God created the world, He designed to rule on the earth through human instruments.

God designed to rule on the earth through human instruments.

The first, God said to **Adam and Eve**, “Have dominion over the earth.”

Have dominion over everything that’s created.

- You rule for Me.
- You are My vice-regent.
- You are My vice-monarch.
- You are My sub-king.

You rule for Me. You mediate My rule on the earth.

Adam and Eve fell prey to Satan. At that point, the rebellion set in, and Satan became the God of this world.

Satan became the prince of this world.

Satan became the monarch of this world.

Satan was ruling in the earth as a supplanter.

But God comes back and says,

- ✓ I still want to mediate My rule on the earth.
- ✓ I want My will known.
- ✓ I want My Word known,
- ✓ I want My principles known,
- ✓ I want My moral standards known,
- ✓ I want people to be subjects to Me, and
- ✓ I want to call men into My kingdom.

God designed to do that, and He did that and has done that from that time on.

### **Even after the fall?**

Yes!

Genesis, we will see that God mediated His rule on the earth through patriarchs. Great godly men who knew the mind of God, the heart of God, the will of God and gave that expression of His will, heart, and mind to the people of their time.

We can trace the men that God used.

We can see the Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and even the Melchizedek, who was a priest of the Most High God.

God mediated His rule through certain individuals.

God called out a nation of people who would be His human agents to mediate His rule, and it was the nation, Israel.

Israel's calling was to give to the world the Word of God.

The statutes of God, the principles of God, the mind of God, the heart of God, and to call the world with the knowledge of the true God,

God, in the nation Israel particularly, called out prophets, priests, and kings to be His key human instruments to mediate His rule on the earth.

We have that all throughout the Old Testament.

When we come to the New Testament and, suddenly, God directly gets involved in mediating His kingdom. Jesus becomes a man through the human instrument God rules.

Jesus comes into this world in human form, and He tells us what God is like and He tells us what God's standards are and He preaches the kingdom of God. Jesus calls for people to be subjected to the kingdom of God.

Jesus is mediating God's kingdom to men.

Jesus is rejected.

He goes back into heaven and immediately the message goes on and it is carried by the apostles.

It is carried by the prophets.

The church then becomes the agency.

In our day, God is mediating His rule on the earth through the believers who are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

We are God's agents to speak the Word of God, to hold up the standards of God, to bring to men God's will and way and moral values.

We are here to call men to enter into God's kingdom.

There will be a day in the future, in the tribulation, when God will anoint **144,000 Jews** and those Jews will mediate in the sense that they will take God's message to the world.

There will be a worldwide revival so that numerable Gentiles and the nation of Israel is saved, and then Christ will come back and mediate His own kingdom on the earth again.

Then that mediated kingdom ultimately will merge completely into the eternal kingdom which is known as the new heavens and the new earth.

All that once began at the creation will end at that final merger, and we will go into eternity that way.

We must understand a little bit about how those two kingdoms work, or two facets of the same kingdom.

Mediatorial kingdom, which on earth is mediated through the instruments God chooses.

**i) True and false**

Kingdom composed of the true and the false.

If you don't understand that, you get very confused biblically. That the kingdom is a term that encompasses all those who externally identify with the people of God.

We are looking at from the earthly view. As we look at the kingdom of God on the earth, the mediatorial kingdom, we see outward profession and inward possession.

We don't know, always, who is real and who isn't.

This has been true in God's kingdom.

You go all the way back when God began to mediate His kingdom after the fall.

For example, in the nation Israel through whom God was mediating His kingdom. There were people in the nation Israel who weren't really true to God.

**Remember what it says in Romans 9?**

As we are studying Romans in our Bible study.

**Romans 9:6**, *But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,*

**Romans 2:28-29**, *For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh;<sup>29</sup> but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.*

There will always be identified with the “kingdom of God” both the true and the false.

**Matthew 8:12**, *But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

If you know anything about the New Testament and anything about the gospels, you know that is a description of that place is eternal hell.

Now, it looks like that believers do not go to hell.

**Is that true?**

Believers do not go to hell.

Unbelievers go to hell.

**What is the title of the people who are sent to hell here?**

Sons of the kingdom.

Therefore, we can conclude that not all sons of the kingdom are believers. That is the whole point the Lord is making.

So, we must see within the framework of the kingdom the true and the false.

**Matthew 13** growing together in the field is the wheat and the tares.

This is consistent all through the Scripture.

**John 15** does not use kingdom terms, it uses the terms of vine and branches, which is an agricultural metaphor rather than a kingdom metaphor.

But, nonetheless, the idea is the same.

**John 15:2**, *Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.*

**Who are the branches?**

*“Every branch in Me.”*

The branches are people in Christ somehow.

**John 15:6**, *If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw them into the fire, and they are burned.*

**What does that describe?**

It describes hell.

A branch in Me that doesn't bear fruit is going to be thrown into hell.

**Does this mean you can lose your salvation?**

No!

We got to go back to the kingdom principle that we can be in the kingdom and not of the King.

You can be superficially attached.

He is talking about a Judas branch at this point.

Where the outward attachment is there but the obvious lack of life is manifest in the fact that there's no fruit.

This is the principle that we must keep in mind as we study Matthew 13.

That the kingdom of God, mediated today, as we are living in this interim period, this time of the mystery kingdom, as at other times in the kingdom will encompass the true and the false.

Some of the sons of the kingdom and some of the branches that attach themselves are going to go to hell.

Because there was no real life there.

There was no real subjection there to the King.

Jesus will show us the character of the kingdom as it will exist in this interim period in which we live.

**ii) Condition to enter.**

God's universal kingdom has no conditions for entrance.

If you are, you are in it. It is everybody and everything forever.

But God's mediatorial kingdom has a condition.

You are not in His mediated kingdom unless you repent.

**Mark 1:15**, and saying, *"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."*

You repent and believe the gospel.

Unless you repent and believe the gospel or else, you are not in God's mediated kingdom.

While you are in His universal kingdom you will suffer under His universal rule over hell but know not the blessing of heaven.

The universal kingdom has no condition for entrance, the mediatorial kingdom does.

When Jesus was coming and saying, *“Repent and believe. The kingdom is at hand.”*

### **What Jesus was asking men to come into?**

The mediatorial aspect of His kingdom, the redeemed community.

There is no room for neutrality at this point.

Over and again the Lord was saying, *“You either receive Me or you don’t.”*

You either accepting the King or rejecting the King, therefore either entering the kingdom or being kept out.

**John the Baptist** asked the Jews to decide,

**Jesus** asked them to decide.

Tragically, they decided the wrong thing.

They refused the King and, therefore, refused His kingdom.

So, Jesus pronounced judgment on them. The full fulfilment of the kingdom was postponed.

**Does that mean there is no kingdom now?**

No, the kingdom now exists, but its primary definition is internal.

In its full fulfilment it will be both internal and external.

In the Scripture we see Jesus Christ sitting on the throne of David in the literal city of Jerusalem, reigning with a rod of iron, and the nations being brought to Jerusalem to see Him there and so forth.

That is the external kingdom of Jesus Christ, objective, touchable literal earth that will come.

**Revelation 20** says it will come to pass on earth for a thousand years, that's the millennial kingdom. It will be preceded by the by the internal response to Christ on a worldwide basis and, particularly, by Israel. Then the kingdom will come and through them to reach the world.

But for now, that external element of it, in its fullness, awaits the belief of Israel.

In the meantime, the kingdom is internal, and God is reaching out across the world and bringing people into His kingdom through salvation.

### **What is the character of this interesting period?**

So many principles that are in chapter 13.

An overview of the whole thing.

**Matthew 13:11**, *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 kingdom of heaven"*

Is used in **verse 11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 47 and 52.**

The phrase "the kingdom of heaven" is used **8 times.**

Some have tried to suggest that the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God are different terms. That is not true. It is simply another way of saying the kingdom of God, God being synonymous with heaven.

So, two titles used to refer to the same thing.

Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Heaven are the same.

### **Why this mystery form?**

The period in which we live is also called the church age.

We are the unique mystery of this period.

**Ephesians 3:4-6**, *by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),<sup>5</sup> which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets: <sup>6</sup>that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel,*

The mystery of this age is that Jew and Gentile would constitute a new body, a new identity unknown. That is the church.

The church is the body of Christ. Made up of Jew and Gentile. That was not seen in the Old Testament. That was hidden from them.

This is the kingdom, but it is also the church age.

We also know that the kingdom is not the same as the church, and the church is not the same as the kingdom.

The kingdom was before the church and the kingdom concept goes beyond the church, but for this period of time they are one and the same.

Within the kingdom both the true and the false.

We had it in the Old Testament with the nation Israel.

We have it now in the church.

We will have it even in the millennium where right on the earth in the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

There will be believers and unbelievers, as witnessed by the fact that at the end of that millennial time when Satan is loosed from the pit and goes about the earth. He gathers a multitude of people and makes an army and fights against Jesus Christ.

Whenever you are looking at the mediated kingdom on earth, either Old Testament or millennium or any time in between, you always see the true and the false side by side.

We are not surprised today to find the church populated by unbelieving people. It may not be that they admit it.

There are four things to focus on in an overview of the chapter.

### **1. The place.**

2. The plan
3. The Purpose
4. The Promise

## The place.

**V 1-2**, *On the same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the sea. <sup>2</sup>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.*

## What day?

Same day with whatever's been going on.

Jesus is in a house at the end of chapter 12.

His mother and brothers and all came to Him.

Prior to that He was letting the Pharisees have it.

Prior to that they had accused Him of blasphemy.

Prior to that He had, **Matthew 12:22**, healed a man possessed with a demon who was blind and dumb, perhaps deaf.

May have been even that there had been other healings.

## Why didn't Matthew start with verse 3 directly?

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

You don't even need V1 and 2.

## **Is that important?**

Throughout Scripture the sea is likened to the group of people known as Gentiles.

Jesus went out of the house and to the sea, at this point He turns from Israel to the Gentiles.

Something new is happening. He has left the house.

Beginning of Jesus ministry, He seemed to be in houses quite a lot. Whereas from here on, toward the end of His ministry He seems to be outdoors a lot. Him teaching by the seaside on the highways and the byways, in the village streets. Him on the hillsides. Him in the countryside.

This is a new dimension. The kingdom is preached to the nations.

Early in the life of Jesus, He spent more time in the synagogue. Later, in the life of Jesus, He spent less time in the synagogue.

The times in His synagogues later in His life were extremely hostile.

**V 2, *And great multitudes were gathered together to Him***

Multitude is going to be the major thrust.

Public curiosity was still very high about Jesus. In spite of the leader's rejection, there were many people who were interested in Him. He fascinated people and they just mobbed Him.

Jesus had so many people pushing Him, they pushed Him into the water.

Those days they would take their little fishing boats and they would beach them up on the sand. Jesus found one of those beached boats, and they pushed the little thing offshore.

He went out about waist deep and got in the boat and He probably had them standing in the water up to their waists, holding the side of the boat, or else He would have been spinning around or being carried along by the tide.

As the water flopped and lapped on the shore, He sat off the shore in His boat.

***V 2**, so that He got into a boat and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.*

What He said, they didn't understand at all.

He will speak so you can't understand Him.

First, He spoke to them in simple terms, no parables. Up to this point there's not one parable recorded.

There are some wonderful allusions, figures of speech, but no parables, because a parable unexplained is a riddle that can't be understood.

When Jesus spoke very clearly they didn't listen then He spoke riddles.

The depth, deeper and deeper into darkness, and so a turning point. But to those who believed, He explained every single detail.

You will understand them, too, if you believe!