

# That Same Day He Spoke To Them In Parables

**DIG: What is a parable? Can the details of the parable be pressed? Why did Jesus start speaking in parables? Was it cruel or just? Arbitrary or deserved? What were the four reasons that the Messiah spoke in parables? What are the five aspects of the Kingdom of God? What are the four kinds of parables?**

It is really important to understand the relationship between **Matthew 12** and **Matthew 13**. It is because of the national rejection of the **Messiah** in **Matthew 12** that **Jesus** begins to teach in **parables** in **Matthew 13:1**. He began to **speak in parables** on the very **same day** that **He** was rejected by the Sanhedrin as the **Messiah**. **Yeshua** stated that **He** would perform no more public miracles to try and convince Isra'el that **He** was the **Son of God**. **Christ** said **His** next sign would be the sign of **Jonah** (Eo - **The Sign of the Prophet Jonah**).

In **Matthew 13:10-18** we learn the purpose of those **parables**. The **apostles** came to **Him** and asked: **Why do you speak to the people in parables (Matthew 13:10)?** That was the start of the change in **Messiah's** ministry (see En - **Four Drastic Changes in Christ's Ministry**). Before then, whenever **He** spoke to the masses, **He** spoke clearly. A good example of this is the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5-7**. **Matthew** tells us that not only did the **people** understand what **He** had said, but **they** also understood the difference between **His** teaching and that of the Pharisees and Torah-teachers. After **His** rejection, however, **Jesus** began teaching the **Jewish masses** in **parables**. That surprised the **Twelve** because **they** knew that, up to that point, that **Jesus** had been teaching **them** clearly. Therefore, the **talmidim** wanted to know why **Christ** had begun speaking to **them** in **parables**.

**Jesus replied: The knowledge of the mysteries (Greek: mysteria) of the kingdom of Heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has, will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. This is why I speak to them in parables: Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand (Matthew 13:11-13).** The words **whoever has** refers to believers. These are the true citizens of **the Kingdom** who have received **the King**. And **whoever** accepts salvation from **God** **will be given more, and they will have an abundance**. But the fate of unbelievers will be just the opposite. Because of **their** unbelief, **they do not have** salvation, and even the light of **God's** truth **will be taken from them**. **They** said no to **the King of kings**, and because **they** refused the divine light that shined on **them**, **they** will sink deeper and deeper into spiritual darkness.<sup>675</sup>

There were four reasons for Jesus teaching in parables. First, parables would illustrate the truth to those of faith. When Jesus started to teach in parables, He said: **Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear** (Matthew 13:9; Mark 4:9; Luke 8:8b). In other words, "**Whoever** has spiritual **ears, let them hear** spiritual truth." The parables taught spiritual truth. **Whoever belongs to God hears what God says** (John 8:47a). **Secondly, parables would hide the truth from the masses that had rejected Him.** Since the nation had rejected the light, no more light would be given. Instead of teaching them clearly in terms they could easily understand as He had before, then He taught them in parables that they could not understand. **Thirdly, parables fulfilled the words of the prophets.** Jesus quoted Isaiah 6:9-10 that prophesied that the Messiah would speak to the apostate Jewish people in such a way that they would not be able to understand. **Fourthly, parables explained the mysteries of the kingdom of God, or God's rule.**

Yeshua spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; He did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet, "I will open My mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world" (Matthew 13:34-35). These verses re-emphasize that Jesus changed the way He talked to the masses after His rejection. This restates the second purpose of the parables and that was to hide the truth from the unbelieving masses. Mattityahu again points out that the prophets spoke of Him. This restated the third purpose of the parables. This time Psalm 78:2 is quoted. By fulfilling the words of the prophets, the Rabbi from Galilee proved that He was indeed the Messiah that had been rejected.

The parallel account to this is found in Mark 4:33-34 where the same point is made: **With many similar parables Yeshua spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when He was alone with His own talmidim, He explained everything to them.** Here Mark adds that when Jesus was alone with His apostles He explained the meanings of each one of these particular parables because until He explained them - the parables were a mystery to them. This restated the first purpose of the parables in that they would illustrate the truth to those of faith. From Christ's rejection by the Sanhedrin onward, this was the method He used consistently. However, whenever Jesus spoke to the masses He spoke in parables.

The purpose of the parables was, and is, to describe the kingdom of God, or God's rule. Matthew uses the phrase: the kingdom of Heaven, while Mark and Luke use the phrase: the kingdom of God. Both phrases are synonymous. Matthew uses the kingdom of Heaven because he was speaking to a Jewish audience who avoided using the name of God. Even today, many Jews used ADONAI, or the LORD, instead of the word God. Orthodox Jews go even further, using the less personal name of Ha'Shem, which means *the name*. For some

Jews their reverence for *the name* is so profound that they refuse to spell the whole word out, but spell it G-d or L-rd instead. **There are five aspects of the kingdom of God.**

**The first aspect of the kingdom of God is that it is an eternal Kingdom that describes God's sovereign rule over His creation.** ADONAI is always in control, and nothing ever happens outside His will. Whatever takes place, happens because He either decrees it or allows it. His **Kingdom** is timeless because God is never out of control. It is also universal. No matter where things exist, everything is within the sovereign will and control of God (Psalm 10:16, 29:10, 74:12, 90:1-6, 83:11-15, 103:19-22, 145:10-13; Proverbs 21:11; Jeremiah 10:18; Lamentations 5:19; Daniel 4:17, 25 and 32, Daniel 6:27; Acts 17:24; First Chronicles 29:11-12).

**The second aspect of the Kingdom of God is that it is a spiritual Kingdom.** Before Pontius Pilate, Jesus said: **My Kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is another form of praise. You are a King, then! Said Pilate. Jesus answered: You are right in saying I am a King. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Me (John 18:36-37).** This spiritual **Kingdom** is composed of all believers who have experienced a new birth by the Ruach HaKodesh. Therefore, every person that has been born again by faith through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit is a member of **the** spiritual **Kingdom**. The true universal Church and **the** spiritual **Kingdom** are one and the same. This is **the Kingdom** of Mattityahu 6:33, where Jesus says: **Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.** It is also **the kingdom of God** in John 3:3-7, that Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus about when He said: **No one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born again (Matthew 19:16, 23-24, John 8:12; Acts 8:12, 14:22, 19:8, 20:25, 28:23; Galatians 5:21; Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 1:13, 4:11; First Thessalonians 2:12; Second Thessalonians 1:5; First Corinthians 6:9-10, 4:20).**

**The third aspect of the kingdom of God was a theocratic Kingdom.** This means God's rule over one nation: Isra'el. Moses established it and the Torah served as its constitution. **The** theocratic **Kingdom** can be seen in two phases in human history. First, God ruled through the mediators of Moses, Joshua, and the judges, through **Second Samuel**. Second, God ruled through monarchs, from Saul, the first king of Isra'el, through Zedekiah, the last king of Isra'el. With the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem in 586 BC, **the** theocratic **Kingdom** ended (from **Genesis 20** to **Second Chronicles 36**), and **the times of the Gentiles** began (see my commentary on **Revelation An - The Times of the Gentiles**).

The fourth aspect of God's kingdom is given two names: the messianic or millennial Kingdom. The messianic Kingdom is the most common Jewish name because it emphasizes who the ruler will be. It was a major area of prophecy in the TaNaKh (Psalm 2:6-12, 72:1-17; Isaiah 9:6-7, 11:1-16; Jeremiah 23:5-6, 32:14-17; Ezekiel 34:23, 37:24; Hosea 3:4-5; Micah 4:6-8, 5:2; Malachi 3:1-4). The millennial Kingdom is the most common Gentile name because it emphasizes that it will last one thousand years. When the times of the Gentiles ends, the messianic Kingdom will begin. It will be a literal, earthly Kingdom from which Jesus will rule and reign from the throne of David in Jerusalem because the basis for this Kingdom is God's Covenant with David (Second Samuel 7:5-16; First Chronicles 17:10-16; Matthew 1:1 and Luke 1:32). This was the Kingdom proclaimed by John the Baptist (Mattityahu 3:2, 4:17, 10:5-7), and it was the Kingdom that was being offered by Jesus from His encounter with Nicodemus (see Bv - Jesus Teaches Nicodemus). The Lord continued to offer the messianic Kingdom until He was accused of demon possession (see Eh - Jesus is Officially Rejected by the Sanhedrin).

The fifth aspect of the kingdom of God was a mystery Kingdom. After Christ's offer of the Kingdom was rejected, from a human perspective, it was withdrawn for a time. Jesus needed to shed His blood for His Kingdom to be ushered in. It is important to understand that He would have had to die even if His offer of the Kingdom had been accepted by the nation because it could only come by blood. If the Jews had accepted Him as their King, the Romans would have viewed it as sedition. He would have been arrested, tried and crucified by the Romans just the same. The difference is that when He arose three days later He would have done away with the Roman Empire and established the messianic Kingdom. The issue was not if He were going to die; the issue was when the Kingdom would be established.

The messianic Kingdom will be reoffered to the Jewish people during the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:14). However, at that time Isra'el will accept Jesus as the Messiah (see my commentary on Revelation Ev - The Basis for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ). As a result of Isra'el's acceptance, He will reign (Zechariah 14:1-15) and establish His messianic Kingdom (Revelation 19:11-20:6).

But since the Kingdom has been rejected, Christ's new policy of speaking to the masses only in parables (Mattityahu 13:34-35) introduces a new aspect of God's Kingdom called the mystery Kingdom. Paul said that he was given the privilege of announcing to the Gentiles the Good News of the Messiah's unfathomable riches, and of letting everyone see how this secret plan is going to work out. God kept this mystery hidden for ages, but now it has been made clear to the people He has set apart for Himself (Ephesians 3:8b-9a; Colossians 1:25 CJB). Today most people think of a mystery as something that

cannot be explained or known. But a **mystery** in the Bible is something that was previously **hidden**, and now is revealed. **The parables** describe the **mystery** form of **God's Kingdom**.

**The mystery Kingdom** begins with the rejection of **Jesus** by the Sanhedrin and continues until the Second Coming. **He** rules this **Kingdom** at the right hand of **the Father** (**Romans 8:34; Hebrews 1:1-3, 12:2**). **The mystery Kingdom** describes the conditions on the earth while **the King** is absent and in heaven. These mysteries reveal what **the kingdom of God** is like. It is made up of both believers and unbelievers, Jews and Gentiles. That is, it reminds us of both the wheat and the weeds (see **Ev - The Parable of the Wheat and the Weeds**).

**The mystery Kingdom** must be kept distinct from the other aspects of **the kingdom of God**. First, **the mystery Kingdom** is not the same as **the eternal Kingdom** because the **mystery Kingdom** is limited to the time between the First and Second Coming. Secondly, it is not the same as **the spiritual Kingdom** because it is made up of believers only, whereas **the mystery Kingdom** will include both believers and unbelievers. Thirdly, it is not the same as **the theocratic Kingdom** because it is no longer limited to one nation, the nation of Israel, but includes both Jews and Gentiles. Fourthly, it is not the same as **the messianic Kingdom** because **the messianic Kingdom** was not a **mystery**. The TaNaKh describes **the messianic Kingdom** in much detail (**Isaiah 60:1-22, 66:1-24; Zechariah 14:16-21**). Nor is **the mystery Kingdom** the Church because the Church is included within the scope of **the mystery Kingdom**, and **the mystery Kingdom** is much broader than the Church itself. It includes the Church Age from **Acts 2** until the Rapture. It also includes the Great Tribulation. The time span of **the mystery Kingdom** starts with the rejection of **the King** in **Matthew 12** until the acceptance of **the King** in the closing days of the Great Tribulation.<sup>676</sup>

**A parable is a figure of speech with a moral or spiritual truth that is taught or illustrated from analogies from everyday life and experience.** It uses the principle of going from the known to the unknown. It goes from a figure to reality. **The parables** are designed to answer the question, "Now that **the King** has been rejected, what will **the kingdom of God** be like until **the messianic Kingdom** is established at the Second Coming?"

Contrasted with an allegory that is not based on reality (see the book *Pilgrim's Progress*) and all the details are important, **a parable makes one major point**. Therefore, you should not press the details of any **parable**. You must discover the major point of **the parable** first. Once that is known, the details of **the parable** will fall into place. You must know the figure before you can understand the reality. The known must be clear before the unknown can be understood. You need to understand the literal figure first before you can understand the spiritual significance. So I will state **the one major point** at the beginning of each **parable**.

**There are four different kinds of parables.** There is a basic difference, for example, between the Good Samaritan (a story), on the one hand, and the Yeast in the Bread (a similitude), on the other hand, and both of these differ from the saying: **You are the salt of the earth** (a metaphor), or **I AM sending you like sheep among the wolves** (a simile). Yet all these can be found from time to time in discussions or **the parables**.

The Good Samaritan is an example of **a story parable**. It is a story, pure and simple, with a beginning and an ending. It also has something of a plot. Other such story **parables** include the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Great Supper, the Laborers in the Vineyard, the Rich Man and Lazarus and the Ten Virgins. They transfer the truth from a specific incident that really happened.

A saying like: **You are the salt of the earth**, is really **a metaphor**. It uses figurative or symbolic language that compares two dissimilar things. When **Yeshua** said: **I AM the gate**, you can understand what **He** was trying to say, but **He** obviously did not become a gate.<sup>677</sup>

**A simile** uses the term "as" or "like." **Jesus** said: **I AM sending you like sheep among the wolves (Matthew 10:16)**, or: **Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand (Mattityahu 7:26)**.

When a simile is expanded from a simple explicit comparison into picture, we then have **a similitude**.<sup>678</sup> The Yeast in the Bread, on the other hand, is more of a similitude. What is said of the yeast, the light put on a stand, or the mustard seed was always true of yeast, the light on a stand, or mustard seeds. Such **parables** are more like illustrations taken from everyday life that **Yeshua** used to make a point. They transfer from common knowledge based upon what people normally do.

As Arnold Fruchtenbaum discusses in his tape series on **the Life of Christ**, we will now look at nine **parables** that collectively develop a basic flow of thought.