

THE COMING KINGDOM



What Is the Kingdom and
How Is Kingdom Now Theology
Changing the Focus of the Church?

Andrew M. Woods

Foreword by Thomas Ice

The Coming Kingdom

Chapter 10



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President – Chafer Theological Seminary

Kingdom Study Outline



1. What does the Bible Say About the Kingdom?
2. The Main Problem with Kingdom Now NT interpretations
3. Why do some believe that we are in the kingdom now?
4. Why does it matter?



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| 1. Eden | 6. Old Testament Prophets |
| 2. Abrahamic Covenant | 7. Post exile |
| 3. Mosaic Covenant | 8. Offer of the King / Kingdom |
| 4. Divided Kingdom | 9. Rejection of the Offer |
| 5. Times of the Gentiles | 10. Interim Age |



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THE INTERIM AGE

1. The Inter-advent Age (Matt. 13)
2. The Church Age (Matt. 16:18)



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2. The Church Age (Matt. 16:18)



Matthew 13 Parables

- Public parables (13:1-2)
 - Sower (13:1-9, 18-23)
 - Wheat and tares (13:24-30, 36-43)
 - Mustard seed (13:31-32)
 - Leaven (13:33)
- Private parables (13:36)
 - Earthen treasure (13:44)
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Matthew 13 Parables

The Sower:

Preaching of the gospel with various results



Why The Parable of the Sower Does Not Teach Kingdom Now Theology

1. The sower went out to sow (13:3)
2. The Word of the Kingdom enters hearts (13:19)
3. Only one type of soil is fruitful (13:23)
4. Satan is active (13:19)



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Matthew 13 Parables

Wheat & Tares:

Difficult to distinguish between
the saved and the unsaved
within professing Christendom



Why The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares Does Not Teach Kingdom Now Theology

1. Both grow together (13:30)
2. The Tares will increase (13:30)
3. No separation until the end of the age (13:39-43)
4. Satan is active (13:25, 28, 38-39)
5. Kingdom to be established at age's conclusion (13:43)



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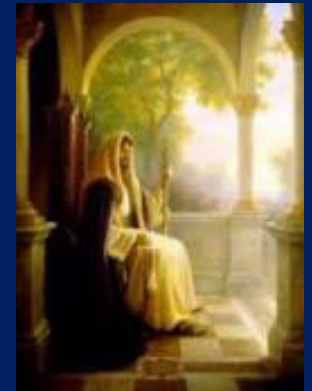
The Mustard Seed:

Christendom will experience great numerical and geographical expansion from a humble beginning and yet will ultimately represent an apostate form at great variance from its pure origins



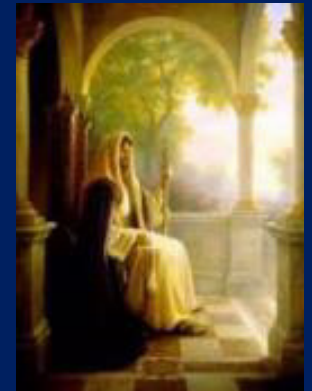
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1. Must be understood in harmony with the first two parables (Matt. 13:23, 30)
2. A great tree whose roots go into the earth (Matt. 13:32; Philip. 3:20; 1 Pet. 2:11)
3. Herbs become a tree? (Matt. 13:32)
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5. Tree with birds in its branches = Gentile powers (Matt. 13:32; Dan. 4:10-12; 20-22; Ezek. 31:6)



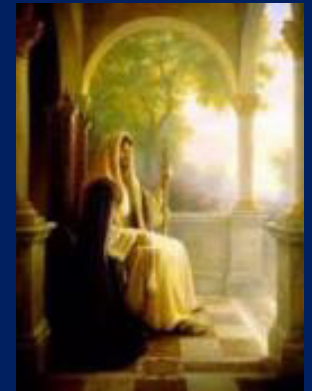
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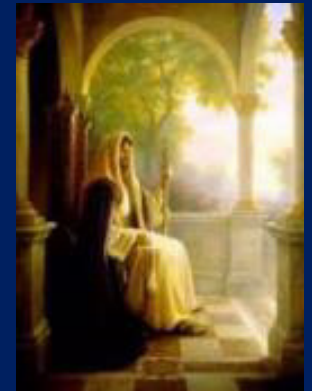
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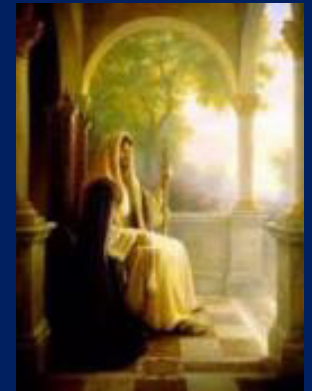


The Prophetic Parables of Matthew Thirteen - A. W. Pink

“Third, that which Christ here describes is a monstrosity. We are aware that this is denied by some, but our Lord’s own words are final. He tells us that when this mustard-seed is grown it is the ‘greatest among herbs, and becomes a tree’ (v. 32). ‘Herbs’ are an entirely different specie from trees. That which distinguished them is that their stems never develop woody tissue, but live only long enough for the development of flowers and seeds. But this ‘herb’ became a ‘tree;’ that is to say, it developed into something entirely foreign to its very nature and constitution.”

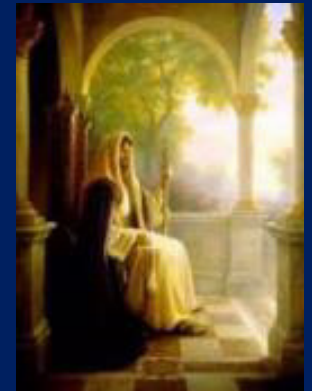
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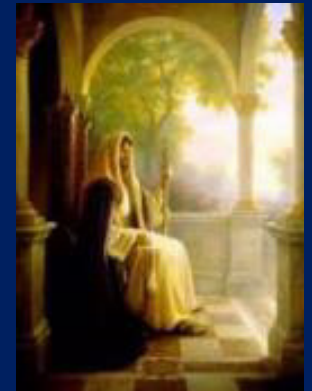
“The *history* of Christendom clearly confirms this...Failing to intimidate as the roaring lion, he now sought to insinuate as the subtle serpent. Ceasing to attack from without, he now worked *from within*. In the first parable the assault was from without—the fowls of the air catching away the Seed. In the second parable his activities were from within—he sowed his tares *among* the wheat. In the third parable we are shown the effects of this. Satan now moved worldly men to seek membership in the churches of God. These soon caused the Truth to be watered down, discipline to be relaxed, that which repelled the world to be kept in the background, and what would appeal to the carnal mind to...

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...be made prominent...The lowly upper room had long been forsaken, and the honors of kings' courts coveted...Thus we may discern in the first three parables of Matthew 13 a striking and sad forecast of the *development of evil*. In the first, the Devil caught away part of the good Seed. In the second, he is seen engaged in the work of imitation. Here, in the third, we are shown a corrupted Christianity affording him shelter.”

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Matthew 13 Parables

The Leaven:

Christendom will experience ever increasing internal corruption throughout the age



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“The popular interpretation of this parable regards the ‘leaven’ as representing the Gospel and its power, the ‘woman’ the Church. Here are the words of Dr. John Gill: ‘Leaven is everywhere else used in a bad sense . . . here it seems to be taken in a good sense, and the Gospel to be compared unto it.’ The ‘woman,’ he tells us, is ‘the church’ or the ministers of the Gospel. . . .”



John MacArthur

Matthew 8–15, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody, 1987), 372–74.

"The first point is that small things can have great influence. . . . The second point . . . is that the influence is positive. . . . When **the kingdom of heaven** is faithfully reflected in the lives of believers, its influence in the world is both pervasive and positive. The life of Christ within believers is spiritual and moral leavening in the world. . . . To the average person of Jesus' day, Jew or Gentile, there is no evidence that **leaven** carried any connotation of evil or corruption. . . . To take this **leaven** as representing evil that permeates the kingdom is to twist the obvious meaning and construction of words."



John MacArthur

Ed. The MacArthur Study Bible
(Nashville: Word, 1997), 1418.

"Here the kingdom is pictured as yeast, multiplying quietly and permeating all that it contacts. The lesson is the same as the parable of the mustard seed. Some interpreters suggested since leaven is nearly always a symbol of evil in Scripture.... It must carry that connotation here as well. They make the leaven some evil influence inside the kingdom. But that twists Jesus' actual words and violates the context, in which Jesus is repeatedly describing the kingdom itself as their pervading influence."



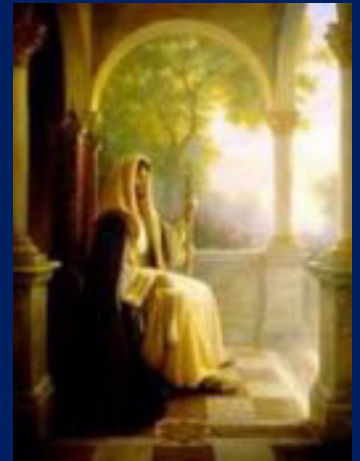
George Zeller

"John MacArthur and Dispensationalism: And Our Response," 13, accessed April 5, 2016, <http://www.middletonbiblechurch.org/dispens/jmacdis.htm>.

"MacArthur's interpretation is not far away from that of the postmillennial reconstructionist who also would understand the leaven as being used in a good sense and indicating the growth of the kingdom of heaven by means of the penetrating power of the gospel ultimately leading to the conversion of the world."

Why The Parable of the Leaven Does Not Teach Kingdom Now Theology

1. The first 3 parables do not speak of world conversion
2. These parables are a mystery (Matt. 13:11, 16-17, 35) and yet the Gospel was known in OT (Gal. 3:8)
3. Leaven is not the Gospel
 - a. Many hear but do not respond
 - b. Women preachers? (1 Tim. 2:12)
 - c. The Gospel humbles and does not puff up
4. Parable's Gospel progress contradicted by history



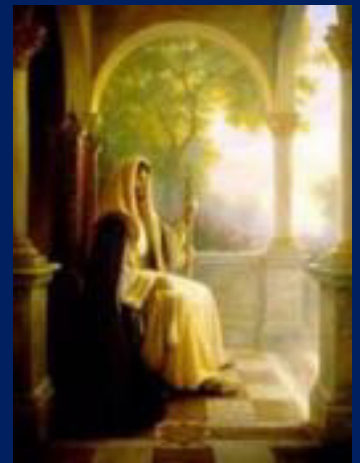
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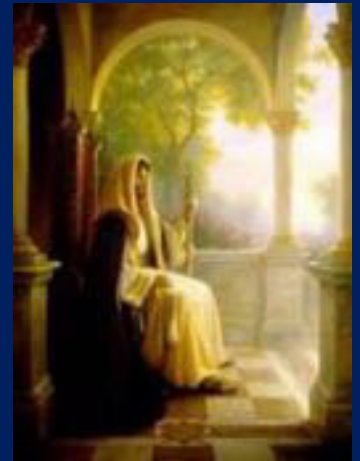
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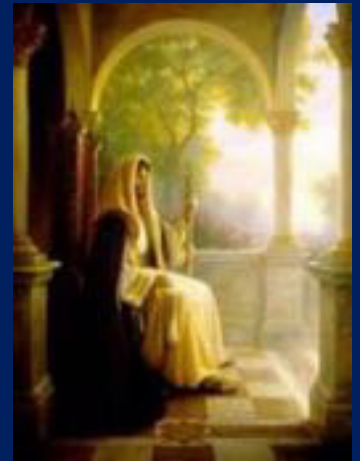
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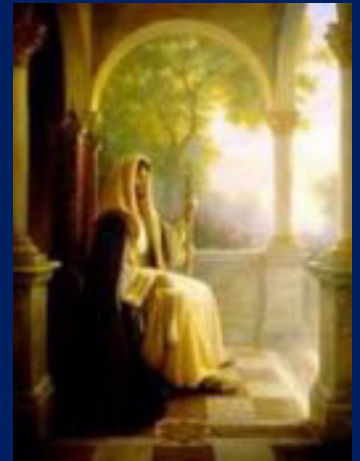
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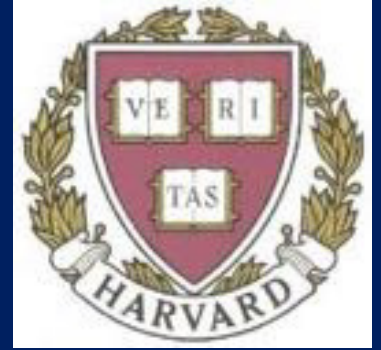
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“The popular interpretation is contradicted by the plain facts of history and by present-day experience. . . . The Gospel has now been preached for nineteen centuries, yet not a single nation or state, no, nor even city, town or village, has been completely evangelized—let alone won to Christ! If the popular view is the correct one, then the Gospel is a colossal and tragic failure.”

Harvard University



“Let every student be plainly instructed and earnestly pressed to consider well the main end of his life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottom as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, let everyone seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seek it of Him (Prov. 2, 3). Everyone shall exercise himself in reading the Scriptures twice a day that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein.”

Rules of Harvard in 1636; quoted in David Barton, *Original Intent*, 81

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5. Leaven is bad rather than good
 - a. Jewish audience
 - b. OT (Gen. 19:3; Exod. 12; 34:25; Lev. 2:11)
 - c. NT (Matt. 16:11-12; Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6-7; Gal. 5:7-9)
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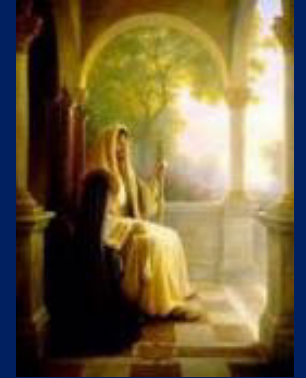
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7. Hiding leaven is not Gospel preaching (Matt. 10:27; 2 Cor. 4:2)



Why The Parable of the Leaven Does Not Teach Kingdom Now Theology

5. Leaven is bad rather than good
 - a. Jewish audience
 - b. OT (Gen. 19:3; Exod. 12; 34:25; Lev. 2:11)
 - c. NT (Matt. 16:11-12; Luke 12:1; 1 Cor. 5:6-7; Gal. 5:7-9)
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Why The Parable of the Leaven Does Not Teach Kingdom Now Theology

1. The first 3 parables do not speak of world conversion
2. These parables are a mystery (Matt. 13:11, 16-17, 35) and yet the Gospel was known in OT (Gal. 3:8)
3. Leaven is not the Gospel
 - a. Many hear but do not respond
 - b. Women preachers? (1 Tim. 2:12)
 - c. The Gospel humbles and does not puff up
4. Parable's Gospel progress contradicted by history



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John F. Walvoord

Matthew: Thy Kingdom Come
(Chicago: Moody, 1974), 102–4.

"What does the leaven represent? Postmillenarians and amillenarians...usually assume dogmatically that leaven cannot represent evil in the parable, although it is universally used to represent evil in both the Old and New Testaments....It is more evident than ever in the last third of the twentieth century that the gospel has not permeated the world and that evil tends to permeate the entire professing church, which is exactly what Matthew 13 teaches. In the Old Testament leaven is consistently used to represent evil....In the New Testament, leaven was used by Christ of the externalism of the Pharisees, of the unbelief of the Sadducees, and of the worldliness of the Herodians, and in general of evil doctrine (Mt 16:6–12; Mk 8:14–21). In Paul's letters, likewise, leaven represents evil, as in 1 Corinthians 5:6–8 and Galatians 5:7–10. In the parable, the meal represents that. . .



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... which is good. ... The professing church, however, is permeated by evil doctrine, externalism, unbelief, and worldliness, which tends to inflate the church and make it larger in appearance, even as the leaven inflates the dough but actually adds nothing of real worth. The history of the church has all too accurately fulfilled this anticipation, and the professing church in the world, large and powerful though it may be, is permeated by the leaven of evil which will be judged in the oven of divine judgment at the end of the age. . . . To some extent, evil will extend even to . . . the body of true believers in the church as well as those that come to Christ after the rapture...even true believers fall far short of perfection and can embrace to some extent worldliness, externalism, and bad doctrine.”



Stanley D. Toussaint

Behold the King: A Study of Matthew
(Grand Rapids, Kregel, 2005), 182.

"The discussion revolves around the significance of the word "leaven" (*zymē*). Many contend that leaven is used here in a good sense and pictures the spread of the gospel throughout the earth. Others state that the word represents evil and is used to illustrate the growth of evil within the group which professes to inherit the kingdom. This latter interpretation has the stronger support. It is consistent with the doctrine of Scripture concerning the evil character of the end of the church age and the tribulation (1 Timothy 4; 2 Timothy 3; Jude; 2 Peter 3; Revelation 6–19). One of the greatest supports for the interpretation that leaven speaks of evil is the use of the word in Scripture. Invariably leaven pictures sin (Exodus 12; Leviticus 2:11; 6:17; 10:12; Matthew 16:12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1; 1 Corinthians 5:6–8; Galatians 5:9). Finally the verb used here, "to hide" . . . is very unusual if . . .



Stanley D. Toussaint

Behold the King: A Study of Matthew
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. . .leaven represents good. It is a much more fitting word if leaven is to have a sinister effect. This is similar to the idea in the parable of the wheat and the darnel. The way the woman hides the leaven in the meal parallels very closely the manner in which the enemy sowed darnel by night. This parable reveals the fact that evil will run its course and dominate the new age. But it also indicates that when the program of evil has been fulfilled, the kingdom will come.”

Conclusion

Matthew 13 Parables

- **Public parables (13:1-2)**
 - Sower (13:1-9, 18-23)
 - Wheat and tares (13:24-30, 36-43)
 - Mustard seed (13:31-32)
 - Leaven (13:33)
- Private parables (13:36)
 - Earthen treasure (13:44)
 - Pearl of great price (13:45-46)
 - Dragnet (13:47-50)
 - Householder (13:51-52)

