

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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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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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)
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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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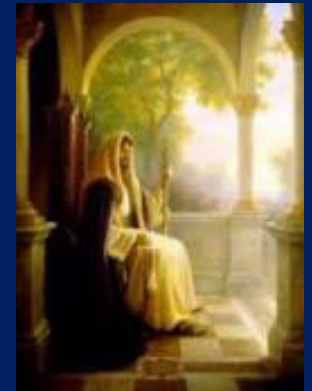
The Mustard Seed:

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



Why The Parable of the Mustard Seed Does Not Teach Kingdom Now Theology

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)
4. Birds = Satan (Matt. 13:32, 4, 19; Gen. 15:11; Deut. 28:26; Rev. 18:2)
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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Matthew 13 Parables

The Leaven:

Christendom will experience ever increasing internal corruption throughout the age



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



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)
6. “Meal” is good rather than bad (Gen. 18:6; 1 Kgs. 17:14-16; John 12:24)
7. Hiding leaven is not Gospel preaching (Matt. 10:27; 2 Cor. 4:2)



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Background to the Matthew 13 Parables

1. Their position in Matthew's Gospel
2. Their mystery nature
3. They do not represent the kingdom
4. They represent course of the present age
5. The experiences of the kingdom's sons
6. They are taught in parables
7. Their two-fold division



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Matthew 13 Parables



The Hidden Treasure:
Israel will remain in unbelief only to be
converted at the age's conclusion

Why The Earthen Treasure Parable Does Not Teach Personal Salvation

1. The field is the world & not Scripture (13:38)
2. Man = JC & not a sinner (13:24, 37, 44)
3. Why spoken of in private? (13:36)
4. How is JC/Gospel hidden in the world? (13:36)
5. Why hide the Gospel after receiving it? (13:44)
6. Works salvation (Matt. 13:44; Isa. 64:6)
7. Sinner purchases the world? (13:38, 44)



Why The Earthen Treasure Parable Does Teach That Israel Will Remain in Unbelief & Only Converted at the Age's Conclusion



1. Man = JC (13:24, 37, 44)
2. Treasure = Israel & not Church (Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2; 32:8; Ps. 135:4)
3. Hidden treasure = Israel's apostasy (13:44)
4. Uncovering of the treasure = kingdom offer (13:44)
5. Re-hiding = Israel's rejection of the offer (Matt. 12) & discipline (Deut. 28:15-68)
6. Purchase of the field = JC's death for Israel (2 Pet. 2:1)
7. Implicit coming again = Israel's conversion at the age's conclusion (13:44)

Matthew 23:37-39 (NASB)

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling. ³⁸ Behold, your house is being left to you desolate! ³⁹ For I say to you, from now on you will not see Me until you say, ‘BLESSED IS HE WHO COMES IN THE NAME OF THE LORD!’”

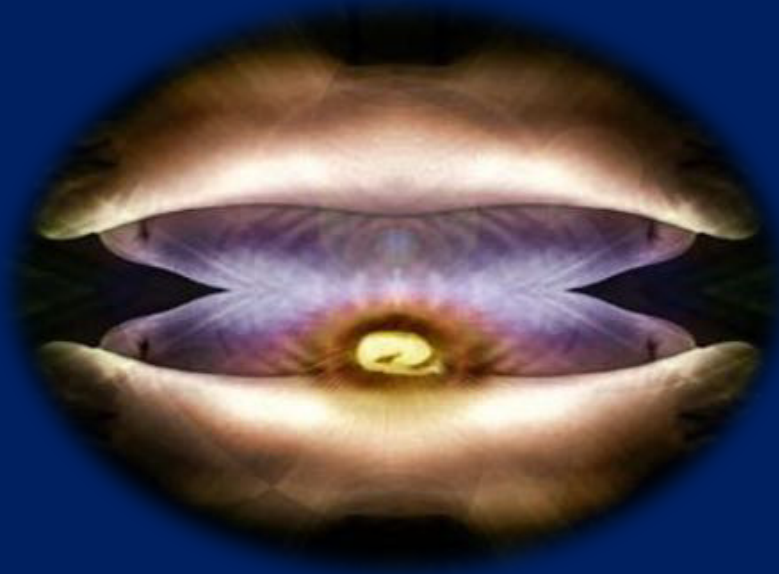


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Matthew 13 Parables



The Pearl of Great Price:

The Lord will gain a treasure from among the Gentiles

Why The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price Does Not Teach Personal Salvation

1. Man = JC & not a sinner (13:24, 37, 44, 45-46)
2. Works salvation (Isa. 64:6; Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 6:23)
3. Men do not seek God (Gen. 3:8-10; Josh. 24:2-3; Luke 19:10; John 3:19-21; 16:7-11; 12:32; Rom. 3:11)



Why The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price Does Teach That The Lord Will Gain a Treasure from Among the Gentiles

1. Man = JC & not a sinner (13:24, 37, 44, 45-46)
2. Pearl = the Gentiles (13:45-46)



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Matthew 13 Parables



The Dragnet:

The coexistence of the righteous and the wicked
only to be separated at the age's conclusion

Why The Parable of the Dragnet Does Not Teach Personal Salvation



1. Co-existence of good and evil
2. Counterfeit sowing (13:39) despite many salvations
3. Giant net of bad fish (“every kind,” “filled,” “drew”)
4. No separation until age’s conclusion (13:48-49)
5. Same message as the Wheat & Tares

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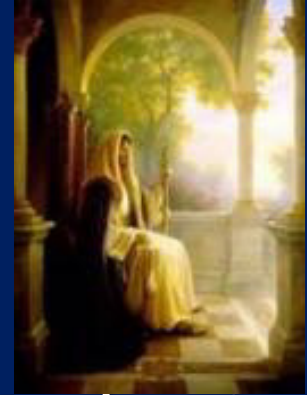
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The Prophetic Parables of Matthew Thirteen - A. W. Pink

“The result is that there is a *mixed* profession. The net gathers in ‘*of every kind.*’ Just as at the beginning of the age there were the wheat and tares, so at the end of the age (to which this parable conducts us) there are bad fish as well as good. Now . . . the fact that this net gathered in bad fishes as well as good ones was *no reflection* upon the skill of the fishermen. But on the other hand, they *were* responsible to distinguish between the good and the bad fish *after* they had entered the net, and they were responsible to separate the one from the other.”

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Why The Rapture is not Found in Matthew's Gospel

1. Those taken are unbelievers taken into judgment (13:49-50, 41-43; 25:46)
2. Those left behind enter the kingdom (24:36-41)
3. The Rapture involves the opposite (1 Thess. 4:13-18)
4. Second Advent at end of Tribulation focus
5. Inter-advent age is broader than the Church Age



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Matthew 13 Parables



The Householder:

These NT truths must be considered alongside OT revelation to comprehend the totality of God's kingdom agenda



Toussaint and Quine

“The parable of the householder in verse 52 is the concluding parable, in which Jesus was saying that the disciples were responsible to teach these new truths as well as the old truths of the Old Testament.”

Stanley D. Toussaint and Jay A. Quine, “No, Not Yet: The Contingency of God’s Promised Kingdom,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 164 (April–June 2007): 139.

Summation of the Matthew 13 Parables

1. Current age is not the kingdom
2. Age of counterfeit sowing & satanic activity (13:39)
3. Outer hindrances (13:20-22)
4. Hardness to the Gospel (13:23)
5. Co-existence of good and evil
6. God's program becomes worldly (13:32)
7. Internal corruption (13:33)
8. God is at work (13:23-24, 44-46)
9. Israel is hidden (13:44; 23:39)



Why Matthew 13 Does Not Teach a Mystery Form of the Kingdom

1. “Mystery Form of the Kingdom” not used (13:11, 38; Gal. 4:17)
2. Inconsistent use of the word “kingdom” or *basileia* (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 6:10; 8:11; 10:7; 13:11; 24:14; 25:1, 34; 26:29)
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Matthew 13:11 (NASB)

Jesus answered them, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted.”



“Mystery” Defined

“In the N.T, it [*mystērion*] denotes, not the mysterious (as with the Eng. word), but that which, being outside the range of unassisted natural apprehension, can be made known only by Divine revelation, and is made known in a manner and at a time appointed by God, and to those who are illumined by His Spirit.”

W. E. Vine, Merrill F. Unger, and William White, *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of the Old and New Testament Words* (Nashville: Nelson, 1996), 424.

Matthew 13:16-17 (NASB)

“But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

¹⁷ For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*.”



Matthew 13:35 (NASB)

"This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet: 'I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world.'"



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

“The eleventh verse of Matthew 13 supplies yet another key, in the word “*mysteries* of the kingdom of heaven.” In Scripture the term “mystery” signifies a Divine *secret* made known by the Holy Spirit. This is confirmed by what is told us in verse 35, namely, that Christ was here uttering “things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” Thus, in these parables, Christ was making known that which was *outside* the scope of O. T. prediction, something which God had *not* made known to Israel through the prophets. This needs to be carefully noted, for it refutes the popular interpretation of these parables.”

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Matthew 13:38 (NASB)

“and the field is the world; and *as for* the good seed, these are the sons of the kingdom; and the tares are the sons of the evil *one*.”



Galatians 4:7 (NASB)

“Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.”





Word of the Kingdom?

“When Jesus explained in Matthew 13:36–43 His parable of the tares among the wheat (vv. 24–30), He said “the sons of the kingdom” and “the sons of the evil one” are represented by the good seed and the tares, respectively (v. 38). The latter are obviously unbelievers, and the former are sons of the kingdom not in the sense that the kingdom is present but in the sense that as believers they will inherit the millennial kingdom.”

Why Matthew 13 Does Not Teach a Mystery Form of the Kingdom

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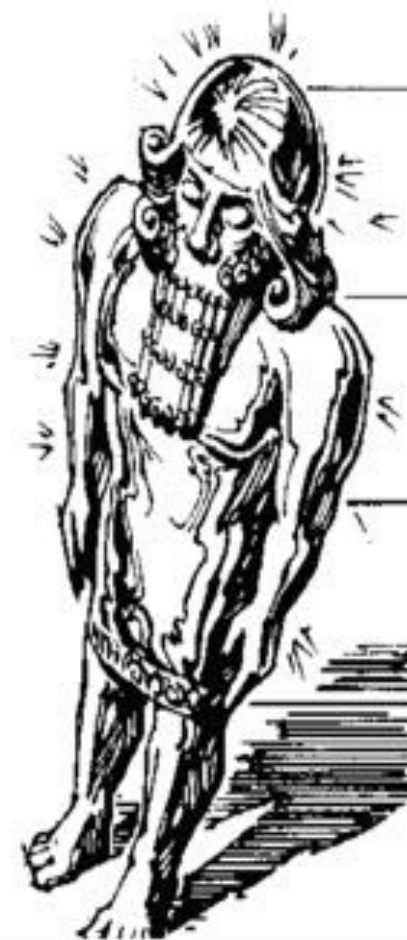


Statue & Stone

2. A Statue and a Stone



Statue is destroyed by a great stone, which represents Jesus Christ



HEAD
GOLD

WORLD POWER
BABYLON
606-539

CHEST AND ARMS
SILVER

WORLD POWER
PERSIA
539-331

STOMACH AND THIGHS
BRASS

WORLD POWER
GREECE
301-323

LEGS AND FEET
IRON & CLAY

WORLD POWER
ROME
322 B.C.—A.D. 476
FUTURE



Merill F. Unger

Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament (Chicago: Moody, 1981; reprint, Chatanooga, TN: AMG, 2002), 1643.

“Hence, the iron kingdom with its feet of iron and clay (cf. 3:33-35, 40, 44) and the nondescript beast of 7:7-8 envision...the form in which it will exist *after the church period*, when God will resume His dealing with the *nation* Israel. How futile for conservative scholars to ignore that fact and to seek to find literal fulfillment of those prophecies in history or in the church, when those predictions refer to events yet future and have no application whatever to the church.”

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Stanley D. Toussaint

"Israel and the Church of a Traditional Dispensationalist," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 237.

“It is often alleged that the Lord predicted a form of the kingdom for the Church age in His parables, particularly those in Matthew 13. For many years dispensationalists have referred to these parables as teaching a mystery form or a new form of the kingdom...However, nowhere in Matthew 13 or anywhere does the Lord Jesus use the term mystery form. Rather, He refers to the ‘mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’ (v. 11); that is, the Lord in these parables is giving to His disciples new truths about the kingdom that were hitherto unknown. It is strange . . .



Stanley D. Toussaint

"Israel and the Church of a Traditional Dispensationalist," in *Three Central Issues in Contemporary Dispensationalism*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1999), 237.

...that so many dispensationalists claim a new form of the kingdom is introduced in Matthew 13. Dispensationalists argue strenuously for a literal, earthly kingdom that is the fulfillment of the Old Testament when John, Jesus, and His disciples announced its nearness. Then suddenly these dispensationalists change the meaning in Matthew 13."



Alva J. McClain

The Greatness of the Kingdom (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959), 440-41.

“The fiction of a present ‘kingdom of heaven’ established on earth in the Church, has been lent some support by an incautious terminology sometimes used in defining the ‘mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’ (Matt. 13:11). The parables of this chapter, it is said carelessly by some, describe the kingdom of heaven as now existing in ‘mystery form’ during the Church age. Now it is true that these parables present certain conditions related to the Kingdom which are contemporaneous with the present age. But nowhere in Matthew 13 is the establishment of the Kingdom placed within this age. On the contrary, in two of these parables the setting up of the Kingdom is definitely placed at the end of the ‘age’ (vss. 39 and 49 ASV, with 41-43).”

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)**



THE INTERIM AGE

1. The Inter-advent Age (Matt. 13)

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

