
Matthew 13 Parables

— Session 1 - Introduction —

Matthew 13:1-3



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Matthew 13:1 - “That day”

Review of events in the life of Jesus

- **Matt 1-2** ~ Royal genealogy, remarkable birth, and early life.
- **Matt 3** ~ John the Baptist announced Messiah, baptized Jesus, proclaimed: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt 3:2).
- **Matt 4** ~ Jesus began public ministry to Israel; taught in synagogues, called His first disciples, miraculously healed many, and proclaimed: *"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"* (Matt 4:17).
- The kingdom being proclaimed was the same one the Jewish people were familiar with from their Scriptures, whose future restoration was proclaimed by nearly every Old Testament prophet.

Matthew 13:1 - “That day”

Prerequisites for establishing the Kingdom

- Jesus did not say, *“The kingdom of heaven has been established.”*
- “The **King** is here and it would be possible for Him to establish the **kingdom** if the nation of Israel would meet the **conditions** for its inauguration.”
- Not only must Israel recognize Jesus as the King chosen by God (**Deut 17:15**), they must also meet the spiritual requirements of national repentance and personal holiness that were clearly stated in their Scriptures (e.g., Lev 11:45; 1 Kings 8:47; Ezek 18:29-32).

Matthew 13:1 - “That day”

Review of events in the life of Jesus

- **Matt 5-7** ~ Jesus taught principles of kingdom ethics in the *Sermon on the Mount*.
- **Matt 8-9** ~ Jesus authenticated His Messiahship through miracles of healing, casting out demons, calming the wind and the waves, restoring a dead girl to life, and giving sight to the blind.
- **Matt 10** ~ Jesus commissioned His disciples to preach the nearness of the kingdom, but only to the lost sheep of Israel.
- **Matt 11** ~ Jesus answered John the Baptist’s disciples, referred to His own rejection by the leaders of Israel (vv. 16-19), condemned the unrepentant cities of Israel, and invited individuals to come to Him in faith.

Matthew 13:1 - “That day”

Events of “That Busy Sabbath Day”

- **Matt 12:1-8** ~ Jesus’ disciples pick heads of grain; Pharisees accuse Jesus of breaking their Sabbath rules. Jesus defended their actions and proclaimed Himself to be Lord of the Sabbath.
- **Matt 12:9-14** ~ Jesus taught in their synagogue; after establishing that it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath, Jesus healed a man with a withered hand. The Pharisees began plotting to destroy Jesus.
- **Matt 12:15-21** ~ Jesus withdrew, but many people followed and He healed those who were sick. Jesus fulfills Isaiah 42:1-4 which confirmed Him as the One chosen by God.

Matthew 13:1 - “That day”

Events of “That Busy Sabbath Day” (*continued*)

- **Matt 12:22-32** ~ Jesus already proved it was lawful to do good on the Sabbath, so He immediately healed a demon-possessed man. The Pharisees accused Him of being in league with Satan, but Jesus refuted that charge; the leaders of Israel commit the unforgivable sin against the Holy Spirit.
- **Matt 12:33-37** ~ Israel’s rejection is final, and Jesus condemned their hardened unbelief and depravity.
- **Matt 12:38-42** ~ Jesus refused to give anything except the sign of Jonah, which prefigured His death, burial, and resurrection as well as the postponement of the kingdom.

Matthew 13:1 - “That day”

Events of “That Busy Sabbath Day” (*continued*)

- **Matt 12:43-45** ~ Jesus illustrated their condition when He spoke of His purifying presence, warning them that unless Israel would fill the clean space with belief in their Messiah, their condition will be worse than before.
- **Matt 12:46-50** ~ Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived, but He aligned Himself with the family of faith rather than with earthly family ties.
- Israel had rejected the King and His kingdom. The consequence is that the prophesied kingdom would be postponed. From this point forward, the nearness of the kingdom is never again mentioned in the Gospels.

Matthew 13:2-3

Jesus left the house and sat by the sea

- Large crowds gathered, so He got into a boat and sat down to teach.
- The whole crowd was standing on the beach, and Jesus spoke to them in parables.
- **Parable** (*parabolē*) ~ “the placing of one thing beside another for the purpose of comparison to illustrate a spiritual or moral truth.”
- A parable does not show its meaning on the surface. Far from *giving explanations*, parables themselves need to *be explained*.
- In Matthew 13 there is no *direct* spiritual teaching to the crowd ~ it is all *indirect*. This was a distinct change in Jesus’ teaching method.

Matthew 13:2-3

Jesus left the house and sat by the sea

- Jesus will give four parables to the crowd, but He will not interpret the meaning of **any** of them for the crowd. Privately, only to His disciples, Jesus will explain two of the parables.
- Matt 13:53 says that all of this teaching took place on *that same day*, so all of these parables should be viewed together as a *consistent unit*.
- All of them must be understood in light of Israel's rejection of Jesus and the postponement of the kingdom.