

## The Parables of Jesus

### Series 1-40

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### **Introduction: Unlocking the Mysteries of the Kingdom**

Jesus Christ never wasted a word. When He spoke in parables, He wasn't simplifying truth—He was **veiling it**, revealing **heaven's mysteries** only to those with **ears to hear and hearts to obey**.

In *Matthew 13:10–11*, the disciples asked why He spoke in parables, and He answered:

*“Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.”*

The parables were not random fables or moral object lessons. They were spiritual X-rays—**diagnosing the heart, dividing the listener, and demanding a response**. They were prophetic, powerful, and profoundly personal.

Each parable in this 40-part series carries a unique weight:

- Some reveal the **nature of the Kingdom** in mystery form.
- Others expose **hypocrisy, pride, and spiritual blindness**.
- Many challenge us to **examine our fruit, readiness, and stewardship**.
- All of them point to the **Lordship, love, and return of Jesus Christ**.

In these pages, you won't just find stories. You'll find **warnings and wisdom, judgment and grace, truth and trembling joy**.

This is not just a series of teachings.

It's a **journey through the heart of God**, as told by His Son.

So lean in.

Listen close.

Let the soil of your heart be ready.

Because the Sower has spoken—and the seed is eternal.

*“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”* (Matthew 13:9)

## **1 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Sower**

*Matthew 13:3–9, 18–23*

### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Sower is more than a simple farming illustration—it is the key to understanding all parables (Mark 4:13). It opens the gateway to the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and reveals the spiritual condition of those who hear God's Word. Spoken during a turning point in Jesus' earthly ministry, this parable highlights both Israel's failure to receive their Messiah and the broader picture of how the Word of God is received across all ages. Its imagery is rich, its application is layered, and its doctrinal implications are immense—especially when rightly divided.

### **The Setting of the Parable**

In Matthew 13, Jesus begins to speak in parables following growing rejection from the religious elite. The leaders of Israel had already accused Him of operating under the power of Beelzebub (Matthew 12:24), and it was evident that their hearts had been hardened. Jesus' shift to parabolic teaching was not to make things clearer—but to reveal truth to believers while concealing it from the willfully blind (Matthew 13:10–13).

The crowd gathered by the sea, a symbol of the Gentile world (Daniel 7:3, Revelation 17:15), shows that the message would now begin to extend beyond just the Jews. Yet, the parable remains deeply rooted in Israel's experience and spiritual state. This context sets the stage for understanding not only what kind of hearers there are, but what dispensation this parable primarily applies to.

### **The Parable Told (Matthew 13:3–9)**

Jesus describes a sower scattering seed across four different types of soil:

1. **Wayside soil** – The seed is eaten by birds.
2. **Stony places** – It sprouts quickly but withers due to shallow roots.
3. **Among thorns** – The seed grows but is choked.

4. **Good ground** – The seed produces fruit in varying amounts.

He closes with the phrase, “*Who hath ears to hear, let him hear*”—a prophetic call rooted in Isaiah 6:9-10, signaling that not all would grasp the meaning.

### **The Parable Explained (Matthew 13:18–23)**

Jesus explains that the **seed** is the “word of the kingdom.” This detail is vital—this is not just any word, but specifically the proclamation of the coming earthly kingdom offered to Israel by her Messiah.

Each soil represents a different **heart condition**, not a different seed. The problem is never with the Word—it’s with the hearer. Here are the four:

#### **1. The Wayside – The Hardened Heart**

*“When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart.”* (Matthew 13:19)

The wayside is compacted, resistant to penetration. This is the heart that has been trampled by religion, worldliness, or pride. The “wicked one” (Satan) snatches the Word before it even takes root.

**Doctrinally**, this is Israel’s leadership—especially the Pharisees—who resisted Jesus’ teaching outright. **Spiritually**, it represents anyone whose heart is closed off to the truth. No matter how clearly the gospel is presented, they do not comprehend because they *will not*.

#### **2. The Stony Places – The Shallow Heart**

*“He that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself...”* (Matthew 13:20–21)

This hearer is enthusiastic at first. There’s emotion, excitement—but no depth. The Word never goes deep enough to withstand trial, persecution, or adversity.

**Doctrinally**, this again pictures first-century Jews who followed Christ only during the hype but abandoned Him at His arrest. **Spiritually**, this is the person moved by a sermon or a song but never genuinely converted.

**Dispensational Insight:** During the Tribulation, many will receive the message of the kingdom joyfully but fall away when the mark of the beast is enforced (cf. Matthew 24:9-10).

### 3. The Thorny Ground – The Distracted Heart

*“The care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word...”* (Matthew 13:22)

This person hears the Word, but the growth is choked by materialism, stress, or a divided heart. The Word is not rejected—it’s simply not prioritized.

**Doctrinally**, this could again picture those in Israel who believed Jesus but loved their positions and prestige more (John 12:42–43). **Spiritually**, it's the believer who never fully surrenders; they are saved but stagnant.

This soil is tragically common in the Laodicean church age (Revelation 3:14–22), where lukewarmness prevails due to material wealth.

### 4. The Good Ground – The Prepared Heart

*“He that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit...”* (Matthew 13:23)

This is the ideal hearer—the heart that receives the Word with understanding and brings forth fruit. The measure of fruit varies, but fruit is always present.

**Doctrinally**, this is the believing remnant of Israel that follows Christ. **Spiritually**, it is the born-again believer who abides in Christ (John 15:4–5). **Dispensationally**, it points to those in any age who receive the Word in faith and act upon it.

### The Doctrinal Application: Israel and the Kingdom

The parable is not merely a general teaching on evangelism—it is deeply **dispensational**. The phrase *“word of the kingdom”* (Matthew 13:19) is crucial. Jesus is offering Israel the kingdom foretold by the prophets (Isaiah 9:6–7; Daniel 2:44), and their response is being tested.

In Matthew’s gospel, the term **“kingdom of heaven”** appears frequently. It refers to the literal, visible, earthly kingdom promised to Israel. The parable reveals the mystery that not all who hear will accept this offer—and that God will allow the process to continue until the end of the age.

## The Dispensational Shift

This parable introduces the concept of the “**mysteries of the kingdom of heaven**” (Matthew 13:11). Up until this point, the kingdom had been openly preached as “at hand.” But now, Jesus begins revealing the form the kingdom will take **during the King’s absence**—a form veiled in mystery, involving both true and false professions, hidden growth, and delayed judgment.

This is the **intermediate phase** between the rejection of the King and His return—a period we now identify as the **Church Age**, though not fully revealed until Paul’s epistles.

## Prophetic Foreshadowing

The four soils prophetically mirror Israel’s historical responses:

1. **Wayside** – The hard-hearted generation at Christ’s first coming.
2. **Stony Ground** – Fickle followers who cried “Hosanna” one day and “Crucify Him” the next.
3. **Thorns** – Religious leaders entangled in worldly concerns.
4. **Good Ground** – The remnant (Romans 11:5) who received the Messiah.

The harvest to come at the Second Advent (Revelation 14:15–16) will be the final fruit gathered from this long sowing season.

## Spiritual Application Today

While the parable is doctrinally for Israel and the kingdom, there is **rich personal application** for the Church Age. Every preacher, evangelist, and believer sharing the gospel will encounter all four types of soil.

- Some will ignore you (wayside).
- Some will seem excited but fall away (stony).
- Some will struggle with divided loyalties (thorns).
- But some will bear fruit, even abundantly (good ground).

This parable encourages the faithful **to keep sowing**. The sower didn't stop after the first rejection—he kept casting seed. The issue isn't with the seed, but the soil. Our job is to sow faithfully and let God bring the increase (1 Corinthians 3:6–7).

### **KJV Cross-References**

- Isaiah 55:10–11 – God's Word will not return void.
- Jeremiah 4:3 – “Break up your fallow ground.”
- Hosea 10:12 – “Sow to yourselves in righteousness.”
- John 15:5 – “He that abideth in me... bringeth forth much fruit.”
- 1 Peter 1:23 – “Being born again... by the word of God.”
- Romans 10:17 – “Faith cometh by hearing... the word of God.”

### **Conclusion: Who Hath Ears to Hear?**

The Parable of the Sower is both a mirror and a map. It shows us who we are and where we're headed. It confronts us with the question: *What kind of soil is your heart?*

Doctrinally, it revealed Israel's failure to receive their King. Dispensationally, it opens the mystery phase of the kingdom during Christ's absence. Spiritually, it reminds us that fruit-bearing is the mark of a true believer.

So, how will we respond to the Word? Hardened? Shallow? Distracted? Or prepared?

The sower is still sowing. The seed is still alive. The soil... is up to us.

### **2 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares**

*Matthew 13:24–30, 36–43*

**Focus: The mystery of the kingdom in the Church Age and Tribulation; judgment at Christ's return**

### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares is the second parable in Matthew 13 and one of the few that Jesus personally explains in detail. Its message is solemn, mysterious, and prophetic. It introduces a crucial shift in God’s dealings—revealing the hidden phase of the Kingdom of Heaven during Christ’s absence. Though the Jews expected the Messiah to immediately set up His kingdom with visible power, Jesus unveiled a time of delay and mingling, during which good and evil would coexist.

This parable sheds light on the mystery of Christendom: a kingdom on earth with both genuine believers and counterfeit ones—true wheat and poisonous tares—growing together until a future separation. Its implications span from the early days of the Church Age through the dark days of the Tribulation and culminate in judgment at the Second Coming of Christ.

### **The Parable Told (Matthew 13:24–30)**

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.”

In this vivid scene, Jesus presents a man sowing **good seed** in his field—representing truth, righteousness, and true believers. But while the caretakers sleep, an **enemy** comes and sows **tares**—weeds that closely resemble wheat in their early stages.

As both begin to grow, servants notice the intrusion and ask the master if they should pull the tares up. But the master tells them to wait, lest they harm the wheat as well. The harvest will be the time for separation, when reapers will gather the tares into bundles to be burned and bring the wheat into the barn.

### **The Parable Explained (Matthew 13:36–43)**

Unlike many of Jesus’ parables, this one is explained clearly to the disciples:

- **The Sower** – The Son of Man (Jesus Christ)
- **The Field** – The world
- **The Good Seed** – Children of the kingdom (true believers)
- **The Tares** – Children of the wicked one (counterfeit Christians, false converts, heretics)

- **The Enemy** – The devil
- **The Harvest** – The end of the world (more precisely, the end of the age)
- **The Reapers** – The angels

This framework provides both a **doctrinal timeline** and a **dispensational insight** into how God permits good and evil to exist side-by-side until the appointed time of judgment.

### **The Mystery of the Kingdom**

The term “kingdom of heaven” in Matthew is not synonymous with the Church. It refers to **the visible, earthly realm** where God’s rule is claimed—even if not genuinely followed. In the Church Age, this includes professing Christendom: churches, organizations, denominations, and individuals claiming to represent Christ.

This parable reveals that within this visible kingdom, **not all are genuine**. There are false brethren (2 Corinthians 11:26), wolves in sheep’s clothing (Matthew 7:15), and tares sown intentionally by Satan. The mixture is not accidental—it is **strategic sabotage**. The devil seeks to corrupt truth not by opposing it directly, but by infiltrating it.

### **The Nature of Tares**

Tares are likely the **darnel weed**, which looks almost identical to wheat in early stages but produces toxic fruit. Only as the grain heads form can one distinguish between them. This reflects how **false doctrine and false teachers** often resemble true believers—until fruit is evident (Matthew 7:16).

The danger is not just in **what tares are**, but in how they **affect the wheat**:

- They compete for nutrients.
- They blend in and confuse.
- Their fruit is poisonous—leading others astray.

This explains why Jesus instructs that the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest. Premature purging risks damage to genuine believers. Separation must be done **at God’s appointed time** and by **His appointed agents**—not by misguided zealots.

### **Historical and Dispensational View**

## Church Age Phase (Mystery Form of the Kingdom)

This parable perfectly pictures the Church Age:

- The sowing began with Christ and His apostles.
- True believers began multiplying, but so did heresies and apostasy.
- Gnosticism, Romanism, cults, and worldly Christianity all grew alongside biblical faith.
- Satan's seed is not merely outside the Church—it's sown **within the visible Church system**.

### Paul warns of this repeatedly:

- *"Grievous wolves shall enter in among you..."* (Acts 20:29)
- *"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."* (2 Corinthians 11:14)

### Tribulation Foreshadowing

Though the Church Age is primarily in view, this parable also has **Tribulation significance**. During that time, many will profess Christ but align with the antichrist system—forming an apostate, ecumenical religion (Revelation 17:5).

The end-time false church, "Mystery Babylon," will be a field of tares ready for judgment. The separation Jesus describes is not the **rapture**, but the **Second Advent** when Christ returns in glory to judge the nations (Matthew 25).

### The Harvest: Judgment at Christ's Return

*"The harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels."* (Matthew 13:39)

This harvest corresponds to Revelation 14:15–20 and Joel 3:13. At the end of the age, Christ will send His angels to:

1. **Bind the tares into bundles** – grouping them for destruction.
2. **Burn them** – symbolizing eternal judgment (hellfire).
3. **Gather the wheat into His barn** – the righteous entering the kingdom.

Note: This is not about the **Church Age rapture** (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17), but the **judgment of the living at Christ's Second Coming**, when He separates the sheep from the goats (Matthew 25:31–46).

## Application to False Christianity

This parable speaks directly to the age of religious confusion. In Christendom today:

- Many preach a **false gospel** (Galatians 1:6–9).
- Many ministers are **false apostles** (2 Corinthians 11:13).
- Many churches teach **damnable heresies** (2 Peter 2:1).

The modern ecumenical movement, prosperity gospel, New Age syncretism, and liberal theology are not mere errors—they are **tares sown by Satan**.

Yet Jesus warns us not to play the role of “reapers” too soon. While we are to contend for the faith (Jude 3), we must allow God to ultimately judge the hearts.

## Personal Application: Examine Yourself

Though doctrinally this applies to the end-time separation, **spiritually** it demands self-examination. Paul wrote:

*“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith...”* (2 Corinthians 13:5)

Are you **wheat or tare**?

- The tare may appear religious but has no root in Christ.
- The tare may use the right vocabulary but has never been born again (John 3:3).
- The tare may even be zealous—but zealous for false doctrine or self-righteousness.

True wheat **produces fruit**—evidence of new life in Christ.

## KJV Cross-References

- **2 Peter 2:1–3** – False teachers among you.
- **Matthew 7:22–23** – Many will say “Lord, Lord” but be cast away.
- **Revelation 14:15–16** – Angelic reaping at end of age.
- **Joel 3:13** – The harvest is ripe; the press is full.
- **1 Timothy 4:1–2** – In latter times some shall depart from the faith.

- **Galatians 6:7–8** – Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

### Symbolism in the Details

1. **Sleeping servants (v.25)** – Symbolize human oversight or negligence. The early Church slept while heresies crept in.
2. **The enemy’s secrecy** – Satan rarely comes openly; he plants his seed quietly.
3. **Similarity of wheat and tares** – Reflects how deception mimics truth.
4. **Binding in bundles** – Possibly hints at modern denominational and ecumenical groupings—bundled together for common doctrine, but ultimately judged.
5. **The fire** – Represents the second death (Revelation 20:14–15). Hell is not allegorical—it is the literal end of all spiritual counterfeits.

### Prophetic Significance

The parable outlines a broad prophetic program:

- **Past** – Jesus sows the Word; Satan responds with counterfeit doctrines.
- **Present** – Both wheat and tares grow within Christendom.
- **Future** – A final, angelic separation at the end of the age.

This fits with the overall theme of **Matthew 13**, which presents 7 parables that together form a prophetic panorama of the kingdom in its mystery form (Church Age + Tribulation) before Christ sets up His literal kingdom on earth.

### The Bright Hope for the Wheat

While judgment is the fate of the tares, the wheat has a glorious future:

*“Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.”* (Matthew 13:43)

This echoes Daniel 12:3 and Revelation 21:23—where the saints inherit the kingdom and radiate the glory of Christ. What a promise! Not only escape from judgment, but a place in the eternal reign of Christ.

## **Final Warning: Let Both Grow Together Until the Harvest**

This is not permission for compromise. We are not to ignore false doctrine—but we must recognize our limitations in ultimate judgment. Church discipline and doctrinal defense are biblical (Titus 1:9), but **heart separation** is the job of the King and His angels.

We are not the reapers—we are the wheat.

Our job? Keep growing. Keep bearing fruit. Stay rooted in the Word. Stay faithful until the harvest.

## **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares is not just a story—it is a prophetic declaration of what the visible kingdom will look like before Christ returns. It warns of deception, assures us of God’s justice, and comforts us with the knowledge that the wheat will be gathered safely home.

**Doctrinally**, it speaks of judgment at the end of the age.

**Dispensationally**, it defines this present era of mixture and mystery.

**Spiritually**, it urges us to remain watchful and fruitful.

The question remains:

Are you wheat... or tare?

## **3 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

*Matthew 13:31–32*

**Focus: Unnatural growth of Christendom, possibly including apostasy**

## **Introduction**

Among all the parables of Jesus, few are as commonly misunderstood or misapplied as the Parable of the Mustard Seed. At first glance, it appears to be a simple and uplifting metaphor: a tiny seed growing into a large tree. Many interpret this as a picture of the gospel spreading and flourishing throughout the world. However, when viewed through a dispensational and doctrinal lens—and especially within the context of Matthew 13, which

unveils the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven—this parable reveals a darker, more cautionary theme.

This is not a story of pure, organic revival but of **unnatural growth**—an overextension of what was meant to be small, humble, and pure. It suggests that Christendom, once small and sincere, would grow into a massive institution, outwardly impressive but inwardly compromised, hosting not only faithful believers but also agents of corruption—just as the previous parable of the Wheat and Tares warned.

To rightly divide the Word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15), we must resist surface-level interpretations and examine this parable in the light of other Scriptures, prophetic insight, and historical fulfillment. In doing so, we uncover a profound warning about the nature of religious power, the Church's visible form during the mystery kingdom age, and the slow infiltration of apostasy.

### **The Parable (Matthew 13:31–32)**

“Another parable put he forth unto them, saying,

The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field:

Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree,

so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.”

This brief but symbolic parable follows the Parables of the Sower and the Wheat and Tares, forming a trilogy of parables that unveil different aspects of the **mystery form** of the kingdom. Christ is no longer offering the literal Davidic kingdom to Israel (they have rejected it); He is revealing the **intermediate phase** where the kingdom exists in a hidden, spiritual, and partially corrupted form until His Second Coming.

### **Literal Elements of the Parable**

Let's break down the core symbols in this parable:

- **Mustard Seed:** A very small seed, commonly understood to represent something humble or insignificant at its start. In nature, mustard plants typically grow into large shrubs, not towering trees.
- **The Man:** Implied to be the sower—Christ Himself, as in the previous parables.

- **The Field:** As with previous parables, the field represents the world.
- **The Growth:** The seed grows not just into a large herb, but into a tree—an unnatural mutation for a mustard plant.
- **The Birds:** Birds “lodge in the branches.” This is the same imagery used earlier, where birds devoured the seed (Matthew 13:4, 19), representing **the wicked one** (Satan).

This unusual transformation from shrub to tree—combined with the return of the birds—raises theological red flags. This is not just growth; it is **unusual growth**—possibly indicating something out of balance or even corrupted.

### **Interpretations: Popular vs. Biblical**

Many popular commentaries and sermons interpret this parable positively:

- The gospel starts small and expands globally.
- The Church begins with a few disciples and grows into billions of followers.
- The branches represent churches, and the birds are people from every nation “finding rest.”

But when viewed in the context of **all seven kingdom parables in Matthew 13**, this interpretation clashes with the surrounding warnings:

- The Sower warns of hearts that reject or distort the Word.
- The Wheat and Tares warn of Satanic imitation.
- The Leaven (next parable) warns of doctrinal corruption. Therefore, it is inconsistent to interpret the Mustard Seed parable as solely positive when all others in the same chapter expose corruption, confusion, and delay.

Instead, it must be viewed **prophetically**, through the lens of Church history and apostasy.

### **Prophetic Foreshadowing: The Rise of Christendom**

The mustard seed is small—just like the humble beginning of the early church. The disciples were unlearned fishermen and tax collectors. They had no wealth, political power, or media. But through the power of the Holy Spirit, they turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). This was God’s design—spiritual fruit through humble vessels.

But what happens when **spiritual power becomes institutional**?

By the 4th century, under Constantine, Christianity moved from persecution to power. The Church, once underground and persecuted, became **officially recognized, funded, and politicized**. What began as a mustard shrub became an **unnatural tree**—tall, wide, and impressive, but bloated with human control.

This is the rise of **Christendom**—not the invisible, true Church, but the visible, organized, institutional “church” mixed with state, culture, and tradition.

Over time:

- The tree spread its branches across Europe and the world.
- It began to house political agendas, military campaigns (Crusades), and false doctrine (indulgences, sacraments as salvation, papal authority).
- The **birds** came and made their home—false teachers, heretics, and even Satanic influence nested comfortably within.

This is not revival. This is corruption dressed in ecclesiastical robes.

### **The Birds of the Air: Satan’s Lodging**

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus clearly identifies birds as representing the **wicked one**, who snatches the Word from unprepared hearts (Matthew 13:19). There's no textual reason to assign a different meaning to birds here. Instead, we see **consistency in symbolism**.

Birds lodging in the tree's branches signify:

- **False prophets and apostles** (2 Corinthians 11:13–15)
- **Doctrines of devils** (1 Timothy 4:1)
- **Satanic counterfeit** within the visible Church

This matches Paul’s warning that the **last days** would be characterized by apostasy—not revival (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The growing tree represents an external **form of godliness** (2 Timothy 3:5) but denies the power thereof.

### **Spiritual vs. Structural Growth**

It’s essential to distinguish between **spiritual fruit** and **structural growth**:

- True spiritual growth results in holiness, sound doctrine, and Christlike living.
- Structural growth can result from compromise, popularity, political favor, and worldly appeal.

Much of what passes as "church growth" today is the mustard tree: wide-reaching, well-funded, culturally accepted, but hosting more **birds** than **fruit**.

Modern megachurches, ecumenical alliances, prosperity gospel empires, and interfaith dialogues all thrive in the branches of this tree—but many deny the essentials of biblical Christianity.

### **Doctrinal Application: The Visible Kingdom's Apostasy**

Doctrinally, this parable fits perfectly in the **prophetic timeline of Christendom**:

1. **Seed Planted (1st Century)** – Christ and the apostles spread the gospel with power and purity.
2. **Early Growth (2nd–3rd Century)** – The gospel spreads despite persecution.
3. **Unnatural Expansion (4th Century onward)** – Church-state unions, false doctrine, and pagan influence corrupt the visible Church.
4. **Apostasy and End-Time Deception** – Massive, counterfeit religious systems dominate under the guise of Christianity.

This aligns with the warning in Revelation 2–3, where the churches of Pergamos and Thyatira represent the corruption and false teaching phase of Church history. Thyatira (Revelation 2:20) even harbors a woman named Jezebel, typifying religious apostasy.

### **Personal Application: Beware of Appearance Without Fruit**

This parable reminds believers to be discerning. Not all that grows is of God. Not every ministry that explodes in size is blessed. Not every organization calling itself "Christian" is preaching truth.

We must ask:

- Does it produce **fruit of righteousness**?
- Does it honor **biblical doctrine**?

- Does it exalt **Jesus Christ above self and systems**?

Spiritual health is not measured in **crowd size**, but in **truth** and **holiness**.

### **The Kingdom in Mystery: Between Two Advents**

This parable is one of the “mysteries of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 13:11). It describes a **time between Christ’s First and Second Coming** when:

- The King is absent.
- The kingdom exists in **form**, but not in **power**.
- Evil and good coexist.
- Growth happens—but not always by the Spirit.

This is where we live now. We are not in the **Millennial Kingdom**—Christ has not yet returned to reign physically. We are in the **mystery phase** where the gospel spreads spiritually, but corruption has infiltrated the structure.

This explains why the Church today:

- Is fractured into thousands of denominations.
- Is full of doctrinal confusion.
- Often compromises with the world to gain influence.

### **KJV Cross-References and Symbolic Parallels**

- **Daniel 4:20–22** – A great tree representing a kingdom; later judged.
- **Ezekiel 17:22–24** – Trees used to represent rulers and nations.
- **Revelation 18:2** – Babylon the Great becomes the “habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.”
- **1 Timothy 4:1** – “In the latter times some shall depart from the faith... giving heed to seducing spirits.”
- **2 Peter 2:1** – “There shall be false teachers among you.”

The consistent pattern in Scripture is that **great trees** represent **great powers or kingdoms**, often apostate. The tree here is not a celebration of gospel victory—it is a prophetic warning of religious corruption.

### **What This Parable Is Not Saying**

- It is **not** teaching that the Church will conquer the world and usher in the kingdom. That is postmillennialism—a false doctrine contradicted by prophecy.
- It is **not** implying all church growth is evil. True spiritual growth still happens where the gospel is preached.
- It is **not** saying the entire Church is false. The **true Church** (the Body of Christ) is preserved by the Holy Spirit and sealed until the day of redemption (Ephesians 4:30).

But it **is** saying that the **visible form** of Christianity would become bloated, institutionalized, and corrupted as it grows unnaturally large and appealing to the world.

### **Hope in the Midst of Corruption**

Though this parable shows the rise of false Christianity, **God always preserves a remnant:**

- In Elijah's day, 7,000 had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19:18).
- During the Reformation, truth resurfaced through men who defied the institutional church.
- In every age, God raises up faithful witnesses who hold fast to the truth.

Even today, among the branches and birds, there is **wheat among the tares**, there is **light in the darkness**, and there are **believers clinging to the pure gospel**.

### **Conclusion: Let the Reader Beware**

The Parable of the Mustard Seed is not just about growth—it is about **the kind of growth** we should expect in the mystery kingdom age. While the Word of God continues to spread and save souls, the **outward form** of Christianity becomes increasingly unnatural, compromised, and infiltrated.

This parable warns us:

- Don't be fooled by size, fame, or power.
- Discern the difference between **fruitful growth** and **fleshly expansion**.
- Be faithful in sowing the Word, even as the world applauds the tree filled with birds.

Just as Christ warned of wolves in sheep's clothing, so He warns here of birds in a tree that was never meant to grow that tall. The test of truth is not appearance—it is alignment with Scripture.

**“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** (Matthew 13:43)

#### **4 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Leaven**

*Matthew 13:33*

**Focus: Corruption hidden in the kingdom of heaven (leaven = false doctrine)**

#### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Leaven is a single verse, yet it delivers a powerful and sobering truth. In Matthew 13:33, Jesus presents a concise illustration involving leaven (yeast) hidden in meal, which eventually spreads through the whole lump. On the surface, many interpret this parable as a symbol of the gospel's positive influence spreading throughout the world. However, when examined carefully, especially in light of the Bible's consistent symbolism for leaven, we discover a darker, more cautionary message.

This parable, like the others in Matthew 13, is part of Jesus' revelation of the **“mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”**—a time of spiritual mixture and corruption during His physical absence. The Leaven parable, when rightly divided, warns of **infiltration, doctrinal compromise, and the progressive corruption** of Christendom, not its triumph.

#### **The Parable (Matthew 13:33)**

“Another parable spake he unto them;  
The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven,  
which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal,  
till the whole was leavened.”

A single sentence. Simple in structure, yet packed with prophetic and doctrinal weight. Let's examine the elements:

- **Leaven** – A symbol of fermentation, corruption, and false doctrine.
- **A woman** – A mysterious figure who introduces the leaven.
- **Three measures of meal** – A standard offering or portion of fine flour in Jewish practice (Genesis 18:6; Leviticus 2:1).
- **Hidden** – An intentional act of concealment.
- **Till the whole was leavened** – A total, pervasive influence.

This is a picture not of natural growth, but of **unnatural contamination**. And the fact that this parable comes immediately after the Mustard Seed (which also described unnatural expansion) confirms a continued theme of **apostasy and corruption** within the visible form of the kingdom.

### Understanding Leaven in Scripture

To understand this parable, we must first let Scripture interpret Scripture. The Bible consistently portrays leaven as a **symbol of sin, false doctrine, and corruption**—never of good.

#### Old Testament Symbolism

- In Exodus 12:15–20, the Israelites were commanded to **purge leaven** from their homes during Passover. It symbolized the removal of corruption before God's deliverance.
- In Leviticus 2:11, God forbade **leaven in grain offerings**: “No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the Lord, shall be made with leaven.”

The only time leaven was allowed was in the **peace offering of thanksgiving** (Leviticus 7:13), where it symbolized that sin was still present, but peace had been made—showing the **exception proves the rule**.

#### New Testament Symbolism

- **Matthew 16:6** – “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” (Jesus later explains this is **their doctrine**.)
- **Mark 8:15** – “Beware of the leaven of Herod” (worldly compromise).

- **Luke 12:1** – “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is **hypocrisy**.”
- **1 Corinthians 5:6–8** – Paul warns the Corinthian church to purge leaven, using it to represent **moral sin**.
- **Galatians 5:9** – “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (referring to **legalism** as a corrupting force).

**Nowhere** in Scripture is leaven used to symbolize something good. To claim that Jesus suddenly uses it positively in Matthew 13:33 violates all biblical consistency.

### **The Woman: A Type of False Religion**

In prophetic typology, a **woman** often represents **a system**—usually religious—and more often than not, a **corrupt one**:

- **Revelation 17** – The great whore, Mystery Babylon, is a woman who rides the beast. She is a picture of false religion, dressed in wealth, full of fornication and blasphemy.
- **Zechariah 5:7–8** – A woman sits in an ephah and is identified as **wickedness**.
- **Jezebel** (Revelation 2:20) – A woman who calls herself a prophetess, teaching and seducing God’s servants to sin.

Therefore, the woman in the Leaven parable is not the Church or the Holy Spirit. She is symbolic of **false religious influence**, subtly introducing corruption into the pure meal.

### **The Three Measures of Meal: The Word and Worship of God**

The “three measures of meal” is a direct allusion to **Genesis 18:6**, where Sarah prepares three measures of fine meal for the Lord and His angels. This was a holy offering—pure, symbolic of reverence and worship.

By hiding leaven into this sacred portion, the woman **corrupts what is meant to be pure**.

In typology, the meal can be seen as representing:

- The **Word of God** (pure doctrine).
- **Worship** (as grain offerings were acts of devotion).
- The **Church’s fellowship** and communion with Christ.

The woman doesn't throw the leaven on top—she **hides** it. This implies **subtlety, secrecy, and deception**. False doctrine is rarely introduced openly. It creeps in through compromise, ecumenism, human philosophy, or tradition.

### **Doctrinal Meaning: The Spread of Apostasy**

When viewed in the context of **Matthew 13**, this parable continues the theme of **spiritual corruption** during the mystery kingdom period (between Christ's first and second advents):

1. **The Sower** – Reveals mixed results from the preaching of the Word.
2. **The Wheat and Tares** – Warns of counterfeit believers growing alongside the genuine.
3. **The Mustard Seed** – Illustrates unnatural growth and institutional bloat.
4. **The Leaven** – Exposes internal corruption, hidden within the system.

Taken together, these parables reveal not a golden age of revival, but a **progressively compromised kingdom**, characterized by **false doctrine, infiltration, and hypocrisy**.

This aligns perfectly with New Testament warnings:

- *“In the latter times some shall depart from the faith...”* (1 Timothy 4:1)
- *“The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine...”* (2 Timothy 4:3)
- *“Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse...”* (2 Timothy 3:13)

Rather than the world becoming more godly through gospel influence, Scripture teaches that the **visible church system** becomes increasingly corrupt—until judgment falls.

### **Church History in Light of the Leaven**

Historically, the parable has proven true:

- In the early centuries, false teachings (Gnosticism, Judaizers, Docetism) crept in.
- By the 4th century, state-sponsored Christianity emerged under Constantine.
- Over time, traditions, rituals, and man-made doctrines began replacing the simplicity of the gospel.

- The Roman Catholic system eventually rose to dominance—fulfilling the picture of the woman leavening the whole lump.

During the Dark Ages, the meal was fully leavened:

- Salvation by grace through faith was obscured.
- The Bible was removed from the common people.
- Superstition, relics, indulgences, and Marian worship dominated.
- The leaven had done its work.

Even after the Reformation, the leaven persisted. Many Protestant denominations eventually adopted liberal theology, higher criticism, and ecumenical unity with Rome.

### **Leaven Today: Modern Apostasy**

In our generation, the leaven is more active than ever:

- **Progressive Christianity** denies sin, hell, and the authority of Scripture.
- **Prosperity theology** replaces the cross with cash.
- **Emergent churches** trade doctrine for experience.
- **Ecumenism** sacrifices truth for unity.
- **Mysticism and New Age spirituality** have infiltrated churches under the banner of contemplative prayer and "spiritual formation."

The leaven has infected seminaries, pulpits, worship music, and even Bible translations. The “whole lump” of visible Christianity is saturated with man’s wisdom, not God’s Word.

### **Spiritual Application: Beware of Hidden Corruption**

Though the doctrinal warning is for Christendom as a whole, the spiritual application is deeply personal. Believers are warned to:

1. **Purge the leaven** – “Let us keep the feast... not with the leaven of malice and wickedness” (1 Corinthians 5:8).
2. **Guard sound doctrine** – “Hold fast the form of sound words” (2 Timothy 1:13).
3. **Be discerning** – “Beloved, believe not every spirit...” (1 John 4:1).

4. **Reject compromise** – “Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness” (Ephesians 5:11).

What starts as a small compromise, if hidden and left unchecked, can permeate an entire life, family, or church.

### **KJV Cross-References**

- **1 Corinthians 5:6–7** – “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Purge out therefore the old leaven...”
- **Galatians 5:9** – “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”
- **Matthew 16:6–12** – Jesus warns of doctrinal leaven.
- **Luke 12:1** – Leaven of the Pharisees = hypocrisy.
- **Revelation 2:20** – Jezebel corrupts the church by teaching false doctrine.
- **2 Timothy 2:17–18** – False teaching spreads like cancer.

### **Prophetic Implications**

The Parable of the Leaven points forward to a time when:

- The majority of Christianity is **compromised**.
- The Word of God is replaced with **tradition and philosophy**.
- Apostasy reaches its peak just before the **return of Christ**.

In Revelation 3, the Laodicean church—lukewarm, blind, and proud—is a fitting description of the fully leavened lump. Jesus stands **outside** the church, knocking (Revelation 3:20), rather than inside, reigning.

This is the end of the leaven’s work: a system so far removed from its original purpose that it doesn’t even recognize Christ.

### **Hope for the Remnant**

Even in a leavened system, God preserves a **faithful remnant**:

- Those who hunger for truth.

- Those who study the Word without compromise.
- Those who separate from doctrinal error.
- Those who cry out for revival—not of numbers, but of **purity**.

Just as Elijah thought he was alone, yet God had reserved 7,000 (1 Kings 19:18), so today God has faithful believers who resist the leaven and cling to the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

## **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Leaven is a solemn warning to all who would follow Christ. It reveals the **hidden corruption** that would permeate the kingdom of heaven during the King's absence—a corruption introduced subtly, but resulting in total defilement.

**Doctrinally**, it speaks of the growing apostasy in the visible Church.

**Dispensationally**, it outlines the mystery phase of the kingdom between the first and second coming.

**Spiritually**, it challenges every believer to remain pure, vigilant, and grounded in truth.

In an age of growing deception, the call is not to blend in—but to stand out. Not to tolerate leaven—but to purge it. Not to follow the crowd—but to follow the Word.

**“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** (Matthew 13:43)

## **5 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Hidden Treasure**

*Matthew 13:44*

**Focus: Israel as God's treasure hidden in the field**

### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, found in Matthew 13:44, is a short but profound glimpse into one of the great mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. On the surface, it seems like a simple tale about a man stumbling upon a valuable treasure buried in a field. But beneath the surface lies a rich prophetic truth—one that connects to God's chosen people, Israel, and their long history of exile, concealment, and future restoration.

Unlike other parables in Matthew 13, which expose corruption, counterfeit Christianity, and doctrinal leaven, this parable marks a shift. Now the focus turns to **what the Lord truly values** and how He has acted on behalf of a hidden people—His treasure—throughout the mystery form of the kingdom between His two advents. While many interpret this parable as representing the believer finding Christ, a closer look at the words, structure, and context reveals a deeper truth: **the treasure is not the Church finding Christ, but Christ purchasing the field to obtain the treasure—Israel.**

### **The Parable (Matthew 13:44)**

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field;  
the which when a man hath found, he hideth,  
and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

There are five elements in this verse that are essential to decode:

1. **Treasure** – Valuable, concealed, and worth a sacrificial price.
2. **Field** – The place where the treasure is hidden.
3. **Man** – The one who finds and values the treasure.
4. **Hideth** – He covers it again after discovery.
5. **Buyeth the field** – He purchases the entire field to possess the treasure.

This verse, though brief, is structured like a parabolic code. Its interpretation requires careful consideration of **biblical symbolism, Old Testament background,** and the overall **dispensational context.**

### **Who Is the Man?**

Throughout the parables in Matthew 13, **the man** who sows, finds, buys, and acts is none other than **the Son of Man—Jesus Christ.** This matches the pattern already established:

- In the Parable of the Sower, **the sower is Christ** (Matthew 13:37).
- In the Wheat and Tares, **the field is the world,** and the **sower is the Son of Man.**
- In the Mustard Seed and Leaven parables, **the man and the woman** are figures acting within the visible form of the kingdom.

It would be inconsistent to suddenly shift and claim this parable is about a **sinner** seeking salvation, when the man throughout the chapter has consistently represented **Christ**.

### **The Field: The World**

In Matthew 13:38, Jesus clearly defines the **field** as the **world**. This is a key interpretive anchor. The treasure is hidden within the world—not in heaven, not in a church building, not in a heart—but in the wide, worldly field. This field, however, is **purchased** by the man. What does that mean?

**Jesus bought the world with His blood** (1 John 2:2; 2 Corinthians 5:19). Though not all will be saved, His atonement is sufficient for all. His death made it legally possible to redeem all creation. But His motive in this parable is not the field—it is the **treasure within it**.

### **The Treasure: Israel**

So what is the treasure? Scripture gives us the answer plainly:

**“For the LORD hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.”**  
(Psalm 135:4)

**“They shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.”**  
(Malachi 3:17)

**“And ye shall be unto me a peculiar treasure above all people...”**  
(Exodus 19:5)

Israel is repeatedly called **God’s peculiar treasure**, His chosen people, His inheritance (Deuteronomy 32:9). This parable speaks of a treasure that was **once visible**, then **hidden**, and later **redeemed**. This perfectly describes Israel’s prophetic journey:

- **Chosen and elevated** under Abraham, Moses, and David.
- **Exiled and scattered** due to unbelief and rebellion.
- **Hidden among the nations** during the Church Age.
- **Purchased and redeemed** through Christ’s work.
- **Restored and exalted** at His Second Coming.

## Why Hide the Treasure Again?

This is one of the most intriguing elements of the parable. Why does the man, after finding the treasure, **hide it again**?

This action reflects the **postponement** of Israel's visible glory. When Christ came the first time, He found Israel—but she rejected Him (John 1:11). After His crucifixion, Israel was set aside **judicially** (Romans 11:7–10), and the **“mystery” phase of the kingdom** began (Romans 11:25).

Just as the treasure was re-hidden, Israel was **dispersed among the nations**, removed from her land in 70 AD, and became a scattered people without a king, temple, or national identity—until 1948, when a partial return began. But the full **restoration is still future**, awaiting the King's return.

## The Joy and the Purchase

The man “for **joy** thereof goeth and **selleth all that he hath**, and **buyeth the field**.” This imagery mirrors Philippians 2:6–8:

“[Christ] made himself of no reputation... and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Jesus **gave all that He had**—His glory, His heavenly position, His life—to **redeem the world**. But His primary objective in this parable was the treasure **within** that field: Israel.

**This is not a story about sinners finding Jesus.** It is a story about **Jesus finding Israel**, valuing her still, and paying the ultimate price for her future redemption.

## Why This Cannot Be the Church Finding Christ

Many well-meaning commentators allegorize this parable as the sinner searching for salvation. But this interpretation falls apart:

1. **The sinner does not seek Christ.**

*“There is none that seeketh after God.”* (Romans 3:11)

2. **The sinner cannot buy salvation.**

*“Not of works... it is the gift of God.”* (Ephesians 2:8–9)

### 3. **The field is the world, not Christ.**

To claim a man sells all he has to obtain Christ (the treasure) is to imply that the sinner purchases salvation by effort, sacrifice, or merit—directly contradicting the doctrine of **salvation by grace through faith**.

### 4. **Christ is not hidden in the world.**

The treasure is hidden; but Christ was **manifested** (1 Timothy 3:16), not concealed.

Therefore, the only biblically consistent interpretation is that **Christ is the man, Israel is the treasure, and the world is the field**.

## **Israel's Hidden Status Today**

Today, Israel remains **hidden**—not forgotten, but concealed in judgment. Paul calls this a **mystery** in Romans 11:

*“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”*  
(Romans 11:25)

This blindness will be lifted when the Church is raptured and God resumes His direct dealings with Israel during the **Tribulation** (Daniel's 70th week). The treasure will be **revealed, purified through fire** (Zechariah 13:9), and **restored** under the reign of Messiah.

## **The Field's Value and Ownership**

It's crucial to note that the man **purchased the whole field**. This reinforces the doctrine of **unlimited atonement**: Christ's death was sufficient to purchase the entire world, though not all will be saved (2 Peter 2:1). The treasure was His specific purpose, but the price covered everything.

This purchase gives Christ legal right to reign over:

- The earth itself (Revelation 11:15)
- The nations (Psalm 2:8)
- Israel (Romans 11:26)

## **Dispensational Overview**

Here's how this parable fits within the **dispensational framework**:

- **Old Testament** – Israel is chosen, exalted, and promised an earthly kingdom.
- **First Coming** – Christ finds His treasure but is rejected.
- **Church Age** – Israel is hidden, while the mystery of the Church is revealed.
- **Tribulation** – Israel undergoes purification and awakening.
- **Second Coming** – Christ claims His treasure and reigns from Jerusalem.

This parable, placed at the midpoint of the seven kingdom parables, marks the **pivot from corruption to restoration**. After exposing false religion, counterfeit believers, and leavened doctrine, Jesus now reveals His **true plan**—the hidden treasure of Israel.

### **Spiritual Application for the Church Today**

Though this parable is doctrinally about Israel, it carries spiritual implications for believers:

- **God never forgets His promises.** What He values, He preserves—even if hidden for a season.
- **Jesus gave all for the joy set before Him.** That joy includes not only Israel, but all who belong to Him (Hebrews 12:2).
- **There is always a remnant.** Even when Israel was dispersed and persecuted, God preserved His people.
- **God’s plan is bigger than we imagine.** While the Church is central in this current age, we are part of a larger redemptive plan that includes national Israel, the Gentile nations, and the coming Kingdom Age.

### **KJV Cross-References**

- **Psalms 135:4** – “The LORD hath chosen Jacob... Israel for his peculiar treasure.”
- **Exodus 19:5** – “A peculiar treasure unto me above all people.”
- **Isaiah 45:3** – “Hidden riches of secret places...”
- **Romans 11:25–26** – Israel’s blindness is temporary.
- **Malachi 3:17** – “They shall be mine... when I make up my jewels.”
- **Matthew 23:39** – “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he...”

## Connection to the Pearl of Great Price

The next parable (Matthew 13:45–46) presents a similar structure but a **different object of value**—a **pearl** rather than a **treasure**. The **treasure in the field** represents **Israel**, buried in the world. The **pearl from the sea** represents the **Church**, taken from among the Gentile nations (symbolized by the sea in prophecy—Revelation 17:15).

Both parables together show Christ’s dual redemptive work:

- One for **His earthly people**, Israel.
- One for **His heavenly body**, the Church.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure, though brief, is a theological powerhouse. It encapsulates the story of Israel—chosen, hidden, and soon to be revealed in glory. It reminds us that though God’s people may seem forgotten, **they are His treasure**, and He has paid the highest price to redeem them.

**Doctrinally**, this parable affirms Israel’s central role in God’s prophetic program.

**Dispensationally**, it helps us rightly divide between the Church Age and Israel’s future restoration.

**Spiritually**, it reminds us that what God values, He will recover—even if hidden for a time.

And in the end, when Christ returns in glory, **the treasure will be revealed**, the King will take His throne, and the kingdom of heaven will be visibly established—just as promised.

**“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** (Matthew 13:43)

## **6 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price**

*Matthew 13:45–46*

**Focus: The Church as a purchased possession, distinct from Israel**

## Introduction

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price is among the most beautiful and profound of Jesus' kingdom parables. Like its twin, the Parable of the Hidden Treasure, it's brief in language but rich in theological depth. Together, these two parables in Matthew 13 offer a dual portrait of God's redemptive plan—first for Israel, and now in this parable, for the Church.

While many readers mistake the pearl as representing salvation, or interpret the merchant as a seeker finding Christ, such a view is inconsistent with Scripture's portrayal of sinners. In reality, the sinner does not seek God (Romans 3:11), cannot buy eternal life (Isaiah 55:1; Ephesians 2:8–9), and does not discover the Son of God through effort or cost. Instead, as with the previous parable, **the man represents Christ**—this time as a merchant seeking something of great value: a pearl, one that has been formed through suffering and hidden in the depths.

This parable is a picture of the **Church Age**, the **mystery of the Body of Christ**, and the immense price Jesus paid to obtain a people from every nation—not just from Israel, but from among the Gentiles. Let's dive into the depths of this parable and draw out the doctrinal, dispensational, and spiritual truths it reveals.

### **The Parable (Matthew 13:45–46)**

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.”

### **Overview of Key Symbols**

Let's identify the key elements:

1. **Merchant Man** – Christ, the seeking Savior.
2. **Goodly Pearls** – Nations, peoples, or religious systems.
3. **One Pearl of Great Price** – The Church, His purchased bride.
4. **Sold All That He Had** – Christ giving Himself completely at the cross.
5. **Bought It** – Redemption through His own blood.

This is not the story of man seeking Christ, but of **Christ seeking the Church**—a treasure unlike any other, formed through trial, beauty, and unity.

## Pearls in Biblical Symbolism

Understanding the symbolism of a **pearl** helps unlock the meaning of this parable. Unlike other gems, pearls are unique in several ways:

- **They are formed in the sea**, within a living organism, and not mined from the earth like other stones.
- **They result from suffering.** A pearl is created when a foreign object irritates an oyster. The creature responds by covering the irritant in layers of nacre (mother-of-pearl), forming something beautiful from affliction.
- **They are one single, unified object**, not a cluster of parts.

These qualities make the pearl a **perfect picture of the Church**, the Body of Christ:

1. **From the Sea** – The sea represents the Gentile nations in prophecy (Revelation 17:15). The Church is made primarily of Gentiles, called out from among the nations (Acts 15:14).
2. **Formed through Suffering** – The Church was brought forth through the sufferings of Christ. His death, burial, and resurrection made it possible for Jew and Gentile to be united in one body (Ephesians 2:13–16).
3. **Unified** – The Church is not Israel or an extension of Israel. It is **one new man**, a singular organism made of many members but forming **one pearl** (Ephesians 4:4–6; 1 Corinthians 12:12–13).

## The Merchant Man: Christ the Seeker

The merchant man is not a sinner looking for salvation. The Bible clearly states:

“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.” (Romans 3:11)

Rather, it is **Jesus** who came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). As the divine merchant, He was not casually browsing—He was **intentionally seeking** something of great value. That treasure, found among the nations, is the **Church**.

This is the Church not in its institutional or denominational sense, but in its **spiritual sense**: the collective body of believers, saved by grace, and joined to Christ as His bride.

## The Pearl of Great Price: The Church

Let's go deeper into how the Church fits this imagery:

- **Formed After Israel's Rejection** – Just as the Parable of the Hidden Treasure depicted Israel being set aside, this parable shows God's work during the present Church Age—a mystery not revealed in the Old Testament (Ephesians 3:4–6).
- **Purchased at Infinite Cost** – Christ “sold all that He had”—He left heaven, laid aside His glory, took on flesh, and gave His life as a ransom (Philippians 2:6–8; 1 Peter 1:18–19). This language matches Paul's words in Acts 20:28: “*the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.*”
- **Distinct from Israel** – Unlike the treasure in the field (Israel), the pearl is **not buried** but **drawn from the sea**, highlighting the Church's **Gentile origin** and heavenly calling (Colossians 1:27).
- **One Unified Body** – The Church is **not many pearls**, but **one**. There is “one body, and one Spirit” (Ephesians 4:4). It is a spiritual organism, not an ethnic nation or political kingdom.

### Why the Pearl is “Great Price”

The price of the pearl was **everything**. Jesus gave His life willingly, joyfully (Hebrews 12:2), and completely. He did not die for a system, a ritual, or an institution. He died for people—people who would become one with Him in spirit and identity.

The “**great price**” speaks of:

- The **value He placed on the Church**, despite its flaws and failures.
- The **suffering He endured** to obtain it.
- The **uniqueness of the Church** in God's eternal plan.

While Israel is the treasure in the field (earthly and national), the pearl is **heavenly and spiritual**—God's secret masterpiece, destined to reign with Christ (Revelation 5:10).

### The Purchase and Its Implications

When the merchant bought the pearl, he **did not just admire it**—he **claimed it**. Christ's death wasn't symbolic; it was transactional. He **redeemed** the Church:

“Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Corinthians 6:20)

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity...” (Titus 2:14)

This purchase implies:

1. **Ownership** – We belong to Christ.
2. **Security** – He will not abandon what He paid for.
3. **Union** – We are united to Him forever (Romans 8:38–39).
4. **Purpose** – The Church exists to glorify Christ as His bride and body.

### **Doctrinal and Dispensational Importance**

Doctrinally, this parable affirms key truths:

- **The Church is not Israel.** It is a separate entity, formed after Christ’s resurrection (Ephesians 2:14–16).
- **The Church was a mystery,** hidden in ages past (Colossians 1:26–27), now revealed through Paul.
- **The Church is God’s heavenly people,** not an earthly nation.
- **Salvation is by grace,** not by merit, works, or discovery.

Dispensationally, the Pearl parable fits between the Hidden Treasure (Israel) and the Dragnet (future judgment). It focuses on **the present age**, when Christ gathers His bride from all nations.

### **Why This Is Not About Man Finding Salvation**

Many teach this parable as if the sinner is the merchant who gives up all to follow Christ. But this conflicts with Scripture:

- The sinner has **nothing to offer** (Isaiah 64:6).
- Eternal life is **not for sale** (Romans 6:23).
- Salvation is a **gift**, not a transaction (Ephesians 2:8–9).
- The sinner is not **seeking pearls**—he is dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1).

The true seeker is **Christ**, who came “to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). The price was **His blood**, not our sacrifice.

### **Spiritual Application for Believers**

Though doctrinally this parable is about the Church as a whole, it speaks personally to every believer:

1. **You are part of something priceless.**  
You were not just saved from sin—you were joined to a body, a bride, a pearl of great price.
2. **Christ valued you infinitely.**  
He gave **everything** to purchase your salvation. Your worth is not in your performance, but in His payment.
3. **Your identity is spiritual and eternal.**  
Like the pearl, you are not of this world. You are formed in Christ, refined through suffering, and destined for glory (Romans 8:18).
4. **You are called to reflect His beauty.**  
Pearls shine not because of polishing, but because of their internal structure. Let Christ’s life in you radiate outward (Galatians 2:20).

### **KJV Cross-References**

- **Philippians 2:6–8** – Christ emptied Himself.
- **Acts 20:28** – Church purchased with His own blood.
- **1 Peter 2:9** – A peculiar people, called out of darkness.
- **Colossians 1:27** – “Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
- **Ephesians 2:14–16** – One new man, Jew and Gentile united.
- **Romans 11:25** – Blindness in part to Israel until the Church is complete.

### **The Bride and the Pearl**

Revelation 21 describes the New Jerusalem, the dwelling place of the Lamb's bride, the Church. The city has:

“Twelve gates... every several gate was of **one pearl.**” (Revelation 21:21)

This is not poetic coincidence. God links the pearl to the bride, to the heavenly city, to eternity. The gates of heaven are **pearls**, not because of legend, but because of **symbolism**—entry into God's presence is only possible because **Christ purchased the pearl** with His blood.

### Comparison with the Hidden Treasure

These two parables form a pair:

<b>Hidden Treasure (v.44)</b>	<b>Pearl of Great Price (v.45–46)</b>
Treasure in a field	Pearl from the sea
Represents Israel	Represents the Church
Earthly and national	Heavenly and spiritual
Buried, hidden again	Brought out and unified
God's covenant people	God's mystery people
Focus: restoration	Focus: redemption

Together, they show the **dual purpose of Christ's redemptive work**—one for Israel (postponed), one for the Church (present).

### Conclusion

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price reveals the beauty, uniqueness, and value of the Church to Christ. It's not about a sinner searching for salvation—it's about the Savior seeking a bride. The Church, formed from suffering, drawn from the nations, and unified in one Spirit, is the pearl Christ purchased at the highest cost.

**Doctrinally**, it affirms the Church's distinction from Israel.

**Dispensationally**, it locates us in the present age of grace.

**Spiritually**, it calls us to live as His treasured possession—pure, unified, and purchased.

Let us never forget: We are not our own—we are **bought with a price**. And in the eyes of the Redeemer, we are His **pearl of great price**.

**“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** (Matthew 13:43)

## **7 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Dragnet**

*Matthew 13:47–50*

**Focus: Separation of the wicked and just at the end of the age**

### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Dragnet concludes the series of seven kingdom parables in Matthew 13, and it does so with sobering clarity. While earlier parables unveiled the mystery form of the kingdom—hidden truths about the Church Age, apostasy, spiritual corruption, and God’s hidden work—this final parable draws the curtain back on what will happen **at the end of this age**. It is not a metaphor for revival. It is a warning of **final judgment, eternal separation**, and the inevitable distinction between the righteous and the wicked when Christ returns.

Like the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares (Matthew 13:24–30), this parable reveals that the coexistence of good and evil is temporary. Though God permits a mingling of true and false throughout this present dispensation, a time is coming when **the angels will make a clear division**, separating those who belong to Christ from those who do not.

Let us dive into this crucial parable with doctrinal precision, dispensational clarity, and spiritual seriousness—because it does not just illustrate a story; it **prophesies a reality** that every person must face.

### **The Parable (Matthew 13:47–50)**

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net,  
that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:  
Which, when it was full, they drew to shore,  
and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.  
So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth,  
and sever the wicked from among the just,

And shall cast them into the furnace of fire:  
there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

### Key Symbols Defined

- **The Net (Dragnet)** – The message of the kingdom and the scope of its reach in the world.
- **The Sea** – The nations of the world, often representing Gentile multitudes (Revelation 17:15).
- **Every Kind** – The diversity of those who hear and respond to the kingdom message.
- **The Shore** – The end of the age, the final judgment.
- **The Sorting** – The separation of righteous (good fish) and wicked (bad fish).
- **The Furnace of Fire** – A clear and literal picture of hell and eternal punishment.

This parable is not symbolic of the Church’s evangelistic efforts only—it is eschatological. It is about **what happens at the end**, not the process of church growth or gospel preaching itself.

### Comparison with the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares

Both the Dragnet and the Wheat and Tares parables speak of a final separation:

- **Wheat and Tares:** Agricultural imagery; seed sown in a field; the wheat gathered, tares burned.
- **Dragnet:** Fishing imagery; fish drawn from the sea; good fish kept, bad discarded and judged.

Both end with this declaration:

**“Furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”**

This repetition is not poetic—it is prophetic.

These two parables are not duplicates, but **reinforcements** of the same theme from different angles. Where the Wheat and Tares showed **imitation and deception**, the Dragnet shows **inclusion and separation**.

## The Scope of the Net

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea...”

The **net** in this parable is a large dragnet, a tool used in ancient fishing where a weighted net was pulled through the sea to gather all kinds of fish indiscriminately.

This represents the **message of the kingdom** going out into the world. During this mystery phase of the kingdom (the Church Age + Tribulation), many will hear and respond outwardly—but not all are genuine.

This net is:

- **Inclusive** – “gathered of every kind” (Jews and Gentiles; moral and immoral; professing believers of all types).
- **Massive** – It encompasses the world system, not merely a small fishing spot.
- **Indiscriminate** – It gathers **everything**, not just what is useful or true.

This mirrors the real-world condition of **professing Christianity**, where denominations, movements, and individuals may identify with Christ but not necessarily be truly converted.

## When the Net is Full

“Which, when it was full, they drew to shore...”

There is a divine timeline. The net will only be “dragged to shore” **when it is full**. This reflects **God’s sovereign control over history**. He allows this present age to continue until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in (Romans 11:25).

Then the net is drawn in. The harvest begins. The time for repentance is over. The judgment commences.

## The Separation: Righteous vs. Wicked

“And sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.”

Here we see the decisive act of separation. This is **not done by men**, but as verse 49 explains, by **angels**:

“The angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just...”

This is a **real, literal event** that takes place at the **Second Coming of Christ**, not at the rapture of the Church.

### **The Good Fish**

These represent those who are **righteous**—those who have placed their faith in the true King, Jesus Christ, and endured faithfully, particularly in a Tribulation context. These are gathered into “vessels,” symbolizing safety, preservation, and reward.

### **The Bad Fish**

These are the **wicked**, those who:

- Rejected the gospel.
- Clung to false religion.
- Took the mark of the beast (in the Tribulation).
- Were religious but never regenerated.

They are **cast away**, not for being unfit by human standards, but because they were never made righteous by God’s grace.

### **The Furnace of Fire: Literal Hell**

“And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus is not using metaphor here. He is describing **hell**—not as a concept or consequence of bad choices, but as a **real place of judgment**.

Let’s be clear:

- This furnace is **not purgatory**.
- It is **not annihilationism**.
- It is **eternal conscious torment** (Revelation 20:10, Matthew 25:41).

The “**wailing**” reflects overwhelming sorrow.

The “**gnashing of teeth**” reflects anger, rage, and bitterness—possibly at God, truth, or themselves.

This solemn phrase appears **six times** in Matthew alone, always connected to judgment and hell. Jesus, more than any other figure in Scripture, **warned of hell**—because He came to save us from it.

## **Dispensational Context: At the End of the Age**

Jesus explains plainly:

“So shall it be **at the end of the world** [Greek: aiōn, age]...” (Matthew 13:49)

This parable does **not** picture the rapture of the Church, where Christ comes to gather His bride (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). The rapture is **a private, joyful rescue** of the saved.

Instead, this is the **public judgment of the living nations** at the end of the Tribulation (Matthew 25:31–46). The Church is already with Christ, and this judgment determines who enters the Millennial Kingdom:

- The **just** (Tribulation saints, those who helped His brethren) enter.
- The **wicked** (those who rejected Christ, followed the Antichrist) are cast into fire.

This perfectly aligns with **Revelation 14:14–20**, where Christ is shown harvesting the earth—first for the righteous, then for the wicked.

## **God’s Longsuffering and Coming Justice**

The fact that the net is still in the water today is not proof that God is ignoring evil—it is proof of His **longsuffering** (2 Peter 3:9). But that patience has an expiration date. Once the net is full, judgment will be swift and final.

Just as Noah warned for 120 years, and the flood came in a day...

Just as Lot fled Sodom and fire fell that morning...

So too, when Christ returns, it will be:

“As in the days of Noah... so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.” (Matthew 24:37)

## **Spiritual Application: Are You a True Fish or Just in the Net?**

This parable forces us to ask a personal question:

**Am I truly saved, or just swimming in the net of Christendom?**

Many people:

- Identify as Christian.

- Attend church.
- Know Scripture.
- Do religious works.

But Christ warned:

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord... and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you.” (Matthew 7:22–23)

True salvation is not by association—it is by **regeneration**. Only those who have been **born again** (John 3:3), **washed in the blood** (Revelation 1:5), and **sealed by the Spirit** (Ephesians 1:13) will be gathered into the vessel of safety.

### **KJV Cross-References**

- **Matthew 13:30** – Let both grow together until the harvest.
- **Revelation 14:14–20** – The double harvest: saints and sinners.
- **Matthew 25:31–46** – Judgment of the nations at Christ’s return.
- **2 Thessalonians 1:7–9** – Vengeance on them that know not God.
- **Revelation 20:11–15** – The Great White Throne and the lake of fire.
- **2 Peter 3:9–10** – The Lord is not slack... but the day of the Lord will come.

### **The Certainty of Judgment**

The modern world downplays judgment. Even many churches neglect or deny the doctrine of hell. But Jesus never avoided the topic. In fact, He repeatedly warned of the “**furnace of fire**” and **eternal consequences** for rejecting Him.

This parable destroys:

- **Universalism** – Not all are saved.
- **Purgatory** – There is no second chance.
- **Annihilation** – The wicked are not merely extinguished.
- **Works-based salvation** – It’s not about what kind of fish you appear to be, but whether you've been made new.

## **The Glorious Hope for the Just**

While the wicked are cast away, the **just are gathered into vessels**. This speaks of:

- **Preservation** – We are kept by Christ (Jude 1:24).
- **Inclusion** – We are not discarded but treasured.
- **Reward** – We will rule and reign with Christ (Revelation 20:6).

This gives us hope—not in our works, but in His Word.

## **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Dragnet reminds us that while the kingdom of heaven now includes a mixture of the genuine and the false, this will not continue forever. A day of reckoning is coming when the net will be drawn in, and every person will be judged—not by their label, their location, or their tradition, but by their spiritual condition.

**Doctrinally**, this parable describes the separation of the wicked and just at the end of the Tribulation.

**Dispensationally**, it shows Christ’s judgment upon the nations at His Second Coming.

**Spiritually**, it demands urgent self-examination: Am I truly in Christ, or merely caught in the net?

Today, the net is still being cast. There is time to repent, to believe the gospel, and to be born again. But soon, the shore will appear, the sorting will begin, and the furnace will be filled.

**“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** (Matthew 13:43)

## **8 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Householder**

*Matthew 13:52*

**Focus: The wise teacher bringing forth treasures old and new (Old & New Testaments)**

## **Introduction**

The Parable of the Householder concludes the monumental series of seven kingdom parables in Matthew 13. While brief, it functions as a capstone—an essential summary and exhortation for those who have ears to hear. Spoken directly to Jesus’ disciples, this parable is unlike the others in that it does not speak of a field, seed, net, or treasure, but of a **scribe turned disciple**, now entrusted with profound spiritual responsibility.

This parable focuses on **the teacher**—the scribe instructed in the kingdom of heaven—who draws from both the **Old and New** treasures, harmonizing God’s revelation across dispensations. It offers profound insights into the call of every Bible teacher, preacher, and student of Scripture: to bring forth the full counsel of God, rightly divided, and spiritually applied.

In a time when many either cling solely to tradition or abandon the Old Testament for grace-only theology, this parable stands as a **clear call to balance, depth, and doctrinal stewardship**.

### **The Parable (Matthew 13:52)**

“Then said he unto them,  
Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven  
is like unto a man that is an householder,  
which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.”

This short but powerful verse is layered with theological and spiritual meaning. Let’s break it down piece by piece before diving into its wider implications.

### **Key Elements Defined**

1. **Scribe** – A student and teacher of the law, often associated with the Old Testament Scriptures and Jewish traditions.
2. **Instructed unto the kingdom of heaven** – One who has received understanding of the mystery form of the kingdom, as revealed in the seven parables preceding this one.
3. **Householder** – A manager or steward of a household, responsible for provision, wisdom, and care.
4. **Treasure** – The accumulated wealth of divine revelation.

5. **Things New and Old** – A reference to the **Old Testament** and the **New Testament**, or more broadly, the Law and the Gospel, the old covenant and the new covenant truths.

### **Background: Why This Parable Matters**

Jesus spoke this after unveiling seven mysteries about the kingdom of heaven—a kingdom in mystery form, due to His rejection by Israel and His postponed reign. His disciples had heard truths never revealed before: tares among the wheat, leaven in the meal, pearls and treasures, nets of judgment.

Now, He turns to them and says: *“Have ye understood all these things?”* (Matthew 13:51). They say, “Yea, Lord.” Whether they fully grasped it or not, Jesus immediately follows with this parable, implying: **If you understand these things, you are now responsible to teach them rightly.**

He’s telling them—and by extension, all teachers today—that the revelation they’ve received must be treated as **precious treasure**, shared carefully, and taught faithfully, drawing on both the **old foundations** and the **new insights**.

### **The Scribe Instructed Unto the Kingdom of Heaven**

In Jewish society, a **scribe** (Greek: *grammateus*) was an expert in the Law of Moses. Scribes were legal scholars, religious teachers, and interpreters of tradition. They were respected, but often rebuked by Jesus for being hypocrites or corrupt (Matthew 23).

Here, Jesus does not condemn the office of the scribe—but **redefines it**. He speaks of a new kind of scribe: one who is **“instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.”**

This is someone who:

- Has heard the Word of the kingdom.
- Understands its mysteries.
- Has rightly divided truth across dispensations.
- Has come under the authority of the King, even while the kingdom is still in mystery form.

In other words, this is not just a Jewish scribe, nor a modern pastor—but **any faithful teacher** of the Word of God who understands both the **old covenant foundation** and the **new covenant fulfillment in Christ**.

### **The Householder: A Steward of Truth**

The scribe is compared to a **householder**—a man responsible for managing his home. In biblical imagery, the householder is a symbol of:

- **Leadership**
- **Provision**
- **Stewardship**
- **Protection**

Just as a father or steward oversees his household and brings out the needed resources for every occasion, the wise teacher draws from his storehouse of knowledge—dispensing truth, exhortation, correction, and encouragement.

Paul often used this imagery when describing his ministry:

“Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and **stewards of the mysteries of God.**” (1 Corinthians 4:1)

A householder does not hoard treasure. He **distributes it** wisely, according to the needs of the household. Likewise, the teacher must **bring forth truth**—both foundational and fresh—for the benefit of the hearer.

### **The Treasure: The Word of God**

The treasure here is the vast wealth of **Scripture**—God’s revealed truth, which includes:

- The **Law, Prophets, and Writings** (Old Testament).
- The **Gospel of the Kingdom** and the **Mystery of the Church** (New Testament).
- The **prophecies of the Second Coming** and the **Millennial Kingdom**.

To the average Jew, the **Old Testament** was the full revelation. But Jesus was now introducing **new mysteries**, things “kept secret from the foundation of the world” (Matthew 13:35).

The wise scribe, then, must recognize the value of **both**:

- The **old**, which forms the foundation: creation, covenant, prophecy, types and shadows.
- The **new**, which brings clarity and fulfillment in Christ: grace, mystery, church doctrine, and kingdom truth.

### **Treasure: Things New and Old**

Jesus says the householder “bringeth forth out of his treasure **things new and old.**”

This phrase is a call to:

1. **Preserve the old truths** – The Old Testament is not outdated. It contains types, shadows, promises, and prophecies that are essential to understanding the New Testament.
2. **Proclaim the new truths** – The mysteries of the kingdom (Matthew 13), the mystery of the Church (Ephesians 3), the gospel of grace (1 Corinthians 15:1–4), and the blessed hope (Titus 2:13) are new revelations—previously hidden.
3. **Rightly divide the Word** – A faithful teacher does not mix Law with grace, nor Israel with the Church. He discerns what applies to whom, and when (2 Timothy 2:15).
4. **Avoid imbalance** – Many today cling only to the old (legalism, Sabbaths, Torah movements), or only to the new (grace without obedience, hyper-dispensationalism). The wise householder honors both.

### **Doctrinal and Dispensational Insight**

This parable reinforces the necessity of **dispensational teaching**. Understanding the **distinctions between Israel and the Church**, the **Old and New Covenants**, the **Law and grace**, and the **different future promises** is key to being an effective householder.

Paul modeled this well:

- In Acts 28:23, he taught “out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets” concerning Christ.
- In Romans 15:4, he reminded believers that “whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.”

- In Ephesians 3:9, he preached “to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.”

The faithful householder:

- Understands **progressive revelation**.
- Recognizes **fulfilled prophecy** versus **unfulfilled prophecy**.
- Teaches Christ as revealed **in the types, in the shadows, and in His full glory**.

### Practical Application for Teachers and Preachers

For anyone called to teach the Word, this parable sets the standard:

1. **Be Studied** – A householder must **know** his treasure before he can share it. Spend time in both Testaments. See Christ in the Passover and in the parables.
2. **Be Balanced** – Don’t neglect the Old Testament, nor remain in it when grace has come. Avoid extremes.
3. **Be Bold** – Bring forth the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27), even the hard truths. Don't just teach what is popular.
4. **Be Christ-Centered** – The Old Testament points to Him. The New Testament reveals Him. The future testifies of His coming reign.
5. **Be Dispensationally Aware** – Don’t confuse the Church with Israel, or blend the Mosaic Law with grace. Know what is for instruction versus what is for direct application.

### Examples of “Old and New” Treasures

Old Treasure	New Treasure
The Passover lamb (Exodus 12)	Christ, our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7)
Tabernacle and sacrifices	Christ as the final sacrifice (Hebrews 10)
Melchizedek, priest of the Most High God	Christ, a priest after Melchizedek (Heb. 7)
Promise to Abraham: a seed and a nation	Fulfilled in Christ and the Church (Gal. 3)

Old Treasure	New Treasure
The Day of the Lord in the Prophets	Further clarified in Revelation
The promise of the kingdom to David	To be fulfilled at Christ's second coming

The wise scribe sees **continuity** and **distinction**—honoring the past while proclaiming the present and future.

### KJV Cross-References

- **2 Timothy 2:15** – Rightly dividing the word of truth.
- **Romans 15:4** – Old Testament for learning and hope.
- **Acts 20:27** – The whole counsel of God.
- **1 Corinthians 10:11** – Old Testament examples written for our admonition.
- **Hebrews 1:1–2** – God spoke in times past and now speaks through His Son.
- **Luke 24:27** – Jesus expounding the Scriptures beginning at Moses and all the prophets.

### Spiritual Application: Every Believer is a Householder

While the parable is directed to scribes and teachers, it applies to **all believers** in a spiritual sense. Every Christian is:

- A steward of truth (1 Peter 4:10).
- A light bearer (Matthew 5:14).
- A priest of God (1 Peter 2:9).
- A student of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16–17).

The question is not **do you have treasure**, but **are you bringing it forth?**

Many believers are spiritually rich but live like paupers—never studying, never teaching, never drawing from the wealth they have in Christ.

### A Final Warning: Unfaithful Stewards

Jesus gave other parables warning of **unfaithful servants** who:

- Hid their talent in the ground (Matthew 25:25).
- Failed to feed the household (Luke 12:45).
- Withheld truth for fear of man.

The faithful householder does **not bury treasure**. He brings it forth.

The world today is starving for **solid biblical truth**. Churches are flooded with shallow messages, motivational fluff, and doctrinal confusion. God is calling a generation of believers to **return to the Book**—to study it deeply, to rightly divide it, and to **bring forth treasures both old and new**.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Householder is Jesus' final charge in the mystery parables of Matthew 13. It is not a story of evangelism, judgment, or deception—but of **teaching, preserving, and dispensing** God's truth across time.

**Doctrinally**, it affirms the value of both Old and New Testament revelation.

**Dispensationally**, it identifies the steward as one who understands how God has revealed truth progressively across ages.

**Spiritually**, it calls every believer to be a faithful manager of the treasure entrusted to them.

Let us be those scribes—discipled, instructed, and spirit-filled—who bring forth from our storehouse the **things old and new**, feeding a hungry world with the eternal Word of the living God.

**“He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.”** (Matthew 13:43)

## **9 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Lost Sheep**

*Luke 15:3–7; Matthew 18:12–14*

**Focus: Christ's mission to lost Israel, and the sinner's need for repentance**

## Introduction

Few parables in Scripture strike the heart as deeply as the Parable of the Lost Sheep. Told by Jesus in both Matthew 18 and Luke 15, this parable portrays a shepherd's tireless search for a single lost sheep—a pursuit fueled not by obligation, but by love. While the parable is often used evangelistically to highlight the sinner's need for salvation, it carries a deeper doctrinal and dispensational significance as well.

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus gives this parable in a context of open criticism from religious leaders who questioned His association with sinners. In Matthew, He gives the same teaching in the context of humble care for His “little ones.” Both versions point toward Christ's **mission to restore lost Israel**, the value of a single soul, and the **heavenly rejoicing** that comes when even one sinner repents.

This parable isn't just a sweet story—it's a glimpse into the **heart of God**, the **plan of redemption**, and the **urgency of the Gospel message**.

### **The Parable (Luke 15:3–7)**

“And he spake this parable unto them, saying,  
What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them,  
doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness,  
and go after that which is lost, until he find it?  
And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.  
And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them,  
Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.  
I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,  
more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.”

### **Key Characters and Symbols**

- **The Shepherd** – Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11).
- **The Lost Sheep** – The individual soul, especially the lost sheep of Israel (Matthew 15:24).
- **The Ninety and Nine** – Those who remain, possibly representing the self-righteous, or preserved remnant.
- **The Wilderness** – The dangers of a fallen world; a place of wandering.

- **The Shoulders** – Symbol of responsibility and strength.
- **The Rejoicing** – The joy in heaven over repentance.

This story may be brief, but every detail is deliberate, loaded with meaning.

### **Historical and Doctrinal Context: Israel as the Lost Sheep**

While the parable certainly teaches about the lost sinner in general, we must understand its **first doctrinal target: the lost sheep of the house of Israel.**

Jesus explicitly said in **Matthew 15:24**:

“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Likewise, in **Matthew 10:6**, He sent the twelve out and instructed them to **go only to the lost sheep of Israel**, not to Gentiles or Samaritans.

This shows us the **primary doctrinal audience** in the Gospels: Israel. They were the **covenant people** of God, chosen for His purposes, yet they had strayed from the Shepherd. Their religious leaders had become hirelings (John 10:12), and the people were scattered like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36).

This parable, therefore, is a rebuke to the **Pharisees and scribes**, who prided themselves on their knowledge of the Law but lacked the heart of the Shepherd. They criticized Jesus for spending time with sinners, but failed to see that the **heart of God is to seek and to save that which was lost** (Luke 19:10).

### **The Shepherd: Christ’s Personal Pursuit**

The shepherd leaves the ninety-nine—not in neglect, but in confident assurance—to go after **one** lost sheep. This pursuit is:

- **Intentional** – “go after that which is lost”
- **Persistent** – “until he find it”
- **Personal** – He doesn’t send a hireling; He goes Himself
- **Compassionate** – He rejoices upon finding it

This is a portrait of Christ’s mission, not only to Israel but to all lost sinners. The Lord does not passively wait for the sheep to return; **He initiates the rescue.** This runs counter to

every religion where man must work his way to God. Christianity begins with **God seeking man**.

### **The Lost Sheep: Every Sinner's Condition**

Sheep are not known for intelligence. They are prone to wander, easily distracted, and defenseless against predators. Spiritually, this is the condition of every unsaved person:

- Lost
- Without direction
- Vulnerable to danger
- Incapable of rescuing themselves

Isaiah 53:6 makes it plain:

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way...”

The lost sheep **cannot find its way back**. It must be **found**. Salvation is not man climbing to God—it is God descending to man.

### **The Shoulders: Salvation Secured by the Shepherd**

Once the shepherd finds the sheep, he **lays it on his shoulders**. This is a powerful image of:

- **Substitution** – Christ bearing our burden.
- **Security** – The sheep is no longer walking but being carried.
- **Ownership** – The shepherd claims it as his own.
- **Joy** – The shepherd rejoices, not scolds.

This reminds us of **Luke 15:5** – “rejoicing.” There is no resentment in the Shepherd. Only joy.

It is not the sheep clinging to the shepherd—it is the shepherd **carrying** the sheep. This is a picture of **eternal security**. The believer is not saved by holding onto God but by **God holding onto them** (John 10:28–29).

### **The Ninety and Nine: The Self-Righteous or Preserved?**

There is debate over who the “ninety and nine” represent. Two interpretations exist:

1. **The self-righteous** – Those who see no need for repentance. Jesus contrasts the joy over the one sinner who repents with the “ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.” These could be the Pharisees—outwardly moral but inwardly lost.
2. **The preserved remnant** – In another sense, they may represent the faithful remnant who are already in the fold. The shepherd does not abandon them; they are secure, allowing him to seek the lost.

Regardless, the focus is not on them, but on the **singular joy over one restored soul**.

### **Heaven’s Rejoicing: The Celebration of Redemption**

“Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.”

The recovery of one soul causes **heavenly celebration**. Angels rejoice. The Trinity rejoices. The host of heaven bursts forth in praise.

Why? Because the soul is:

- Of **eternal value**
- **Redeemed** from judgment
- **Restored** to the Shepherd

Heaven does not rejoice over good works, religious rituals, or wealth—but over **repentance**. One humble sinner turning to Christ causes a party in heaven.

This shows the value of **individual salvation**. God is not just saving crowds—He’s rescuing **you**.

### **Matthew 18 Version: The Care of the Little Ones**

In Matthew 18:12–14, Jesus tells the same parable but with a slightly different emphasis:

“Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.” (v.14)

Here, the focus is on the **tender care Christ has for His followers**, especially those who are weak, vulnerable, or newly converted. He warns against despising “these little ones”—both children and childlike believers.

This reveals:

- God's **intimate care** for every believer.
- The seriousness of leading others astray (v.6).
- The Shepherd's **protective instinct**.

### **Repentance: The Key to Restoration**

Luke 15:7 makes the focus clear:

“Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth...”

This parable does not teach universalism. Not every lost sheep is automatically restored. **Repentance** is required—acknowledging sin, turning from it, and placing faith in Christ.

Repentance is:

- **Personal** – It is between the sinner and God.
- **Necessary** – Without repentance, there is no restoration.
- **Fruit-bearing** – True repentance brings change.

Salvation is not merely being found—it is being **forgiven and transformed**.

### **The Heart of the Shepherd**

This parable, above all, reveals the **heart of Christ**:

- He **seeks** the lost.
- He **loves** the individual.
- He **bears** the burden.
- He **rejoices** in restoration.

Jesus is not indifferent to your wandering. He doesn't say, “They'll come back when they're ready.” He goes **after you, until He finds you**.

No matter how far you've strayed, His eyes are searching, His feet are moving, and His shoulders are ready.

## KJV Cross-References

- **Psalm 23:1** – “The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.”
- **Isaiah 53:6** – “All we like sheep have gone astray...”
- **Ezekiel 34:11** – “Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.”
- **John 10:11** – “I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.”
- **Luke 19:10** – “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
- **1 Peter 2:25** – “For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.”

## The Broader Picture: Luke 15 and the Trilogy of Redemption

The Parable of the Lost Sheep is the **first in a trilogy** of parables in Luke 15:

1. **The Lost Sheep** – Lost through **foolish wandering**.
2. **The Lost Coin** – Lost through **careless handling**.
3. **The Prodigal Son** – Lost through **willful rebellion**.

Each story emphasizes:

- The **value** of what was lost.
- The **search** or waiting of someone who cares.
- The **joyful restoration**.

Together, they present a full picture of God’s heart:

- The **Son** (Shepherd) seeks the sheep.
- The **Spirit** (Woman) searches the house.
- The **Father** (Prodigal’s father) waits for the son.

All three members of the Trinity are involved in **our salvation**.

## Spiritual Application

1. **Do you realize you are the lost sheep?**

No one is born in the fold. All have gone astray. Acknowledging this is the first step toward repentance.

2. **Have you responded to the Shepherd's call?**

He is searching, not angrily, but lovingly. Are you resisting or receiving?

3. **Are you rejoicing over others being found?**

Too often, the “ninety-nine” resent the one who gets all the attention. But true believers celebrate when others are saved.

4. **Are you helping or hindering lost sheep?**

God calls believers to reflect His heart. Are you drawing others toward Christ or away?

## **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Lost Sheep is more than a simple tale—it is the gospel in miniature. It reveals the nature of man (lost), the heart of Christ (seeking), the path to salvation (repentance), and the joy of heaven (rejoicing).

**Doctrinally**, it speaks of Christ's mission to **restore lost Israel**.

**Dispensationally**, it fits within the Gospel period as He ministers to Jews first.

**Spiritually**, it reveals how **every soul matters**, how **salvation is initiated by God**, and how **heaven rejoices in redemption**.

If you're lost, the Shepherd is seeking.

If you've been found, it's time to rejoice.

If you're a teacher or believer, it's time to reflect His heart.

**“Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.”** (Luke 15:6)

## **10 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Lost Coin**

*Luke 15:8–10*

**Focus: God's diligence in seeking the lost; emphasis on personal value**

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## **Introduction**

Among the most intimate and poignant illustrations Jesus shared, the Parable of the Lost Coin, found in Luke 15:8–10, is often overlooked due to its brevity. Yet this short parable is packed with theological richness, spiritual insight, and heartfelt emotion. Together with the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Parable of the Prodigal Son, it forms the second part of the “Lost” trilogy in Luke 15—a chapter that fully reveals the seeking heart of God and His joy in the salvation of the individual.

While the Parable of the Lost Sheep reveals Christ as the Good Shepherd pursuing the foolish wanderer, the Lost Coin reveals **God’s thorough diligence**, careful searching, and unwavering commitment to recover what belongs to Him. More than that, it speaks to the **personal value of every soul**, even when lost, overlooked, or forgotten in the dark corners of life.

This parable isn’t merely about a coin—it’s about the character of God, the value of the sinner, and the joy that erupts in heaven when the lost is found.

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### **The Parable (Luke 15:8–10)**

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

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### **Key Elements in the Parable**

To understand the depth of this parable, let’s break down its components:

1. **The Woman** – A picture of God, or specifically the Holy Spirit, acting in diligent love and determination.
2. **Ten Pieces of Silver** – Ten drachmas, possibly a marriage dowry or ornamental headdress, making them symbolically precious.
3. **One Lost Coin** – A soul separated from God, hidden in darkness and dirt.
4. **The Candle** – Illumination, light of truth, the Word, or the Spirit’s work.
5. **The Sweeping** – Thorough examination and cleansing; Spirit-led conviction.

6. **The Diligence** – The effort and intention in God's seeking.

7. **The Rejoicing** – Joy in heaven over one sinner's repentance.

This simple domestic scene, grounded in everyday life, unfolds a timeless spiritual reality.

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### **The Cultural Context: The Value of the Coin**

The “ten pieces of silver” mentioned are **ten drachmas**, each roughly equivalent to a day's wage. But in the cultural setting of the time, these coins likely formed part of a **bridal dowry** or an **ornamental headdress** worn by a married woman. These coins, therefore, were not merely financial assets—they held **sentimental and symbolic value**.

Losing one wasn't just a matter of economics; it was emotionally significant. It would be akin to losing one diamond from a wedding ring—a small piece in size, but precious in value and deeply personal.

So the woman's **urgency, diligence, and joy** upon recovery reflect not obsession over money, but a **love for that which is hers**, that which has intrinsic worth.

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### **Doctrinal Meaning: The Sinner's Value to God**

This parable, like the others in Luke 15, is spoken in response to the Pharisees' accusation:

“This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” (Luke 15:2)

Jesus' response is not a theological debate—it's a trilogy of stories that reveal the **heart of God toward the lost**.

In the Lost Sheep, the sinner is pictured as foolishly wandering.

In the Lost Coin, the sinner is helplessly hidden.

In the Prodigal Son, the sinner is rebelliously distant.

Each image reveals a different dimension of man's lostness and God's seeking love.

This parable in particular illustrates that:

- The sinner is **lost within the house** (a key point).
- The sinner cannot find God—he must be **found**.
- The sinner is **valued**, even in lostness.
- The recovery leads to **heavenly joy**.

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### **The Lost Coin: The Hidden Sinner**

Unlike the lost sheep who wanders away, the coin is lost **in the house**. It hasn't gone far—but it's still lost. This reflects the condition of many souls today:

- **In religion, but not in Christ**
- **In church, but not in salvation**
- **Near truth, but still blind**
- **Raised around the gospel, but never converted**

Some of the most deeply lost people are not in the streets, but **in the pews**—unregenerate churchgoers, moral people, even religious leaders who have never repented and believed.

They are lost **inside the house**, perhaps assumed saved by others—but hidden in darkness, buried beneath dust and debris.

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### **The Woman: A Picture of God's Diligent Spirit**

In this parable, the woman represents the nature of God—specifically the work of the **Holy Spirit**, who:

- **Illuminates the Word** (the candle)
- **Cleanses and convicts** (the sweeping)
- **Searches the heart** (the diligence)
- **Rejoices in salvation**

The Holy Spirit is not passive. He is the active agent in bringing sinners to Christ. The woman doesn't wait for the coin to roll out into the light. She initiates the search. This parallels:

“The Spirit of truth... he shall guide you into all truth...” (John 16:13)

“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment...” (John 16:8)

Salvation is not man's discovery of God—it is God's Spirit drawing, convicting, and revealing truth.

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## Lighting the Candle: Illumination through the Word

The first step the woman takes is to **light a candle**. In biblical symbolism, light represents:

- **Truth** – “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet...” (Psalm 119:105)
- **Christ Himself** – “I am the light of the world...” (John 8:12)
- **The Gospel** – “...to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light...” (Acts 26:18)

No lost soul is ever found apart from the illumination of God’s Word. It is the **candle** that reveals the hiding place of the lost. Only by the **light of Scripture** can the hidden sinner be exposed, understood, and retrieved.

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## Sweeping the House: Thorough, Careful Conviction

The next action is **sweeping**. This represents the deep, searching work of the Spirit to uncover what is buried—whether under dirt, dust, or forgetfulness.

Sweeping implies:

- **Effort** – This isn’t a casual search.
- **Disruption** – Dust flies, things are moved.
- **Persistence** – The search continues “until she find it.”

God does not conduct half-hearted searches. The Spirit convicts of sin, moves hearts, exposes idolatry, and disturbs complacency. He turns over every stone in the conscience.

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## The Diligent Search: Until She Finds It

The phrase “**till she find it**” shows the **relentless nature of divine pursuit**. God doesn’t give up. He is not satisfied with 90% of the coins. He seeks until the **lost is found**.

This refutes the idea that God is indifferent to individual salvation. Each soul matters. Every “coin” is part of the set. The Gospel is not about mass movements—it’s about **the individual being saved and restored**.

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## When She Finds It: Joy Overflowing

Upon finding the coin, the woman does not say, “Finally, back to normal.” No, she calls her friends and neighbors and says:

“Rejoice with me!”

Her joy is not private—it is **shared**. This symbolizes:

- The **rejoicing of heaven** (v.10).
- The **celebration in the Church** when someone is saved.
- The **delight of God** in the redemption of sinners.

Every genuine conversion, whether public or private, ignites joy in the courts of heaven.

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## Joy in the Presence of the Angels

Jesus concludes:

“There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

Note: It doesn’t just say the angels rejoice—it says **there is joy in their presence**. This implies that **God Himself rejoices**, and the angels witness it. The angels are fascinated by the plan of salvation (1 Peter 1:12), and they rejoice when one more soul is added to the redeemed.

This highlights the **incalculable worth** of the human soul. God is not impressed by the planets, stars, or galaxies—but when one sinner repents, the **eternal God rejoices**.

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## Repentance: The Central Theme

As with the other parables in Luke 15, the joy is **not automatic**—it comes from **repentance**. This parable teaches that:

- The lost soul is not just **missing**; it is **morally separated**.
- Salvation is not just **restoration**, but **redemption**.
- Repentance is the **hinge** upon which joy swings.

God seeks, illuminates, convicts—but the soul must **repent**. Repentance is a gift, but it is also a responsibility. It is not mere regret; it is a **turning of heart and mind toward Christ**.

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## KJV Cross-References

- **Psalm 119:105** – “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”
- **Proverbs 20:27** – “The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD...”
- **Ezekiel 34:16** – “I will seek that which was lost...”
- **John 16:13** – “He will guide you into all truth.”
- **1 Peter 1:12** – Angels desire to look into these things.
- **Acts 26:18** – “...to turn them from darkness to light...”

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## Spiritual and Personal Application

This parable reminds us that:

1. **Every soul has worth.**  
You are not just a number to God. You are a treasure—made in His image, bought by Christ’s blood.
2. **Salvation is initiated by God.**  
He seeks, He shines light, He sweeps. You don’t find God—He finds you.
3. **Repentance brings joy to heaven.**  
True repentance—turning from sin to God—causes celebration in the presence of angels.
4. **The Church should reflect this joy.**  
We must rejoice over every salvation, not begrudge the attention or grace given to others.
5. **We are called to seek the lost.**  
As vessels of the Spirit, we must share in His mission—shining light, moving obstacles, and lovingly pursuing those who are hidden and hurting.

## Contrast with the Other Luke 15 Parables

<b>Lost Sheep</b>	<b>Lost Coin</b>	<b>Lost Son (Prodigal)</b>
Lost through wandering	Lost through neglect	Lost through willful rebellion
Found by the Shepherd	Found by the Woman	Returns to the Father
Picture of the Son	Picture of the Spirit	Picture of the Father
Outside the fold	Inside the house	Outside the home

Together, they form a **Trinitarian image** of salvation:

- The **Son** (Shepherd) seeks.
- The **Spirit** (Woman) searches.
- The **Father** (Prodigal's father) receives.

## **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Lost Coin, though brief, reveals profound truths about the heart of God. It teaches us that:

**Doctrinally**, every soul, even in darkness, retains value to God.

**Dispensationally**, it speaks of God's pursuit of Israel and the hidden sinners among His people.

**Spiritually**, it calls each person to recognize their lostness, receive the light of the Gospel, and repent—bringing joy to heaven.

You may feel overlooked, dusty, or buried in the shadows. But you are part of God's dowry, His treasured possession, and He is seeking you diligently.

**“Rejoice with me,”** He says, **“for I have found the piece which I had lost.”**

## **11 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Prodigal Son**

*Luke 15:11–32*

**Focus: Israel (or any sinner) returning to the Father; the older son may picture Pharisees**

## **Introduction**

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is arguably the most beloved and emotionally powerful of all Jesus' parables. It's often called the "Crown Jewel" of Luke 15, following the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin. Yet while those earlier parables spotlight the Good Shepherd and the Spirit's diligent search, this third parable draws us into the heart of the Father—a portrait of God's love, patience, and joy at a sinner's return.

But behind the tender imagery lies a deeper doctrinal message, especially when viewed through a **dispensational lens**. The parable not only represents the personal return of a backslidden sinner, but it also reflects the broader **national return of Israel**, God's firstborn son (Exodus 4:22). Meanwhile, the **older brother**—angry, self-righteous, and unwilling to celebrate—mirrors the attitude of the Pharisees and religious elite, who despised the grace Jesus showed toward publicans and sinners.

This parable is not just a beautiful story of forgiveness; it is a multilayered revelation of God's plan for redemption—both individually and nationally.

### **The Parable (Luke 15:11–32)**

“And he said, A certain man had two sons:  
And the younger of them said to his father,  
Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.  
And he divided unto them his living...”

So begins a masterful narrative, filled with symbols, reversals, and spiritual truths. The story revolves around **three characters**:

1. **The Father** – A picture of God, rich in mercy and love.
2. **The Younger Son** – A symbol of the wayward sinner, or the nation of Israel in rebellion.
3. **The Older Son** – A representation of the Pharisees or self-righteous individuals who resent grace extended to others.

### **The Younger Son: Rebellion and Ruin**

“Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.”

This demand shows the son's desire to enjoy the father's blessings **without relationship**. In essence, he wished his father dead, since inheritance normally comes after death. This mirrors humanity's natural state—**wanting God's gifts without God's presence**.

In the Jewish context, this also symbolizes **Israel's rebellion**. Though chosen as God's covenant people, they turned from Him, rejected His prophets, and later, His Son (Acts 7:52). They demanded their own way—chasing idols, aligning with Gentile powers, and indulging in spiritual whoredom (Ezekiel 16).

The son:

- **Takes his wealth** – Israel was blessed beyond all nations (Romans 9:4–5).
- **Leaves the father's house** – Israel turned from God to the nations.
- **Wastes his substance in riotous living** – They squandered God's truth and blessings on idolatry and worldliness.
- **Ends in famine** – Cut off from spiritual nourishment.
- **Feeds swine** – A Gentile occupation, detestable to Jews; Israel ended up among the nations, unclean and broken.

This spiral from **rebellion to ruin** pictures not only the prodigal individual, but the **national fall of Israel**, especially after rejecting Christ.

### **The Moment of Realization: Repentance Begins**

“And when he came to himself...”

This powerful phrase marks the turning point. True repentance starts when the sinner:

- Acknowledges his condition.
- Compares his life now to the Father's provision.
- Decides to return in humility.

“I will arise and go to my father...”

This is a picture of biblical **repentance**—a change of mind that leads to a change of action. It's not about returning to the land or to religion, but to the **Father**.

Doctrinally, this pictures Israel's future repentance:

“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence...” (Hosea 5:15)

“After two days will he revive us: in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.” (Hosea 6:2)

Just as the prodigal returned after his time of wandering, so Israel will return at the end of the Tribulation, when they say:

“Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” (Matthew 23:39)

### **The Father: Running to the Sinner**

“But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.”

This is one of the most moving scenes in all of Scripture.

In the ancient Jewish culture, men—especially patriarchs—**did not run**. But this father **runs** to meet his son, signifying urgency, excitement, and **grace**. He doesn't wait for an apology. He initiates the embrace.

This is the **heart of God**:

- **Compassionate** – Moved deeply by the sight of the returning one.
- **Responsive** – The Father draws near when we take even one step toward Him (James 4:8).
- **Forgiving** – The embrace comes **before** the confession.
- **Restorative** – The Father doesn't treat him as a servant, but as a son.

Spiritually, this is **every sinner's salvation story**. When we confess our sin and return, the Father meets us with open arms, not scorn.

Doctrinally, this is a glimpse into the **future restoration of Israel**, when the Father will welcome His wayward people back into covenant blessing.

### **The Restoration: Robe, Ring, and Shoes**

“Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet...”

This full restoration includes:

- **Robe** – Symbol of righteousness (Isaiah 61:10)
- **Ring** – Symbol of authority and sonship (Genesis 41:42)

- **Shoes** – Symbol of freedom (slaves often went barefoot)

The Father doesn't say, "Earn your way back." He **immediately reinstates** the son's position—grace, not works.

This again foreshadows Israel's future:

"I will betroth thee unto me for ever..." (Hosea 2:19)

And reflects the Church's standing now:

"To her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen..." (Revelation 19:8)

### **The Feast: Celebration in Heaven**

"Let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found."

This echoes the theme from the previous two parables: **heaven rejoices over one sinner that repents.**

In Jewish tradition, feasting signified joy, covenant, and reconciliation. The Father's joy wasn't just emotional—it was **public.**

This also pictures the **future Millennial celebration**, when Israel is restored, the Church reigns with Christ, and the kingdom is established on earth.

### **The Older Son: The Pharisaical Heart**

"Now his elder son was in the field... and he was angry, and would not go in."

Here lies the critical twist.

The older son:

- **Hears music but feels resentment.**
- **Sees grace but feels injustice.**
- **Boasts of works but lacks love.**
- **Refuses to enter the feast.**

This is a picture of the **Pharisees**—those who prided themselves on religious observance, but **lacked the heart of the Father.**

He says:

“Lo, these many years do I serve thee... yet thou never gavest me a kid...”

The elder brother represents all who:

- Think salvation is earned.
- Resent mercy extended to others.
- Are “close to God” in works, but far in heart.

His **refusal to enter** shows that **self-righteousness separates a person just as much as sin does.**

The Father’s plea to him is equally gracious:

“Son, thou art ever with me... it was meet that we should make merry...”

Jesus was appealing to the Pharisees: “You claim to serve God. Then rejoice when the lost return.”

### **Doctrinal & Dispensational View**

This parable is **multi-layered**:

- **Doctrinally**, it shows:
  - The sinner’s fall, repentance, and salvation.
  - God's heart toward restoration.
- **Dispensationally**, it shows:
  - **The fall of Israel (younger son)** – departure, dispersion, and famine.
  - **The future repentance and restoration of Israel.**
  - **The Pharisees (elder son)** – self-righteous and angry at grace.

Romans 11 captures this dynamic perfectly:

“God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” (Romans 11:32)

### **KJV Cross-References**

- **Exodus 4:22** – “Israel is my son, even my firstborn.”
- **Isaiah 1:4** – “A sinful nation... they are gone away backward.”
- **Hosea 14:1** – “O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God...”
- **James 4:8** – “Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you.”
- **Isaiah 61:10** – “He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation...”
- **Romans 10:3** – “For they being ignorant of God's righteousness...”
- **Romans 11:25–26** – “All Israel shall be saved...”

### Spiritual Application

1. **The Father is waiting.**  
If you’ve wandered, return. There’s no anger—only grace.
2. **Repentance is the doorway to joy.**  
Don’t wallow in guilt. Arise and go to the Father.
3. **Grace is shocking.**  
It upends the religious mindset. Embrace it. Extend it.
4. **Resentment kills joy.**  
The older brother had everything, but he had no joy. Don’t miss the celebration because of envy or pride.
5. **God celebrates individuals.**  
Heaven rejoices over one. You are not lost in the crowd.

### Conclusion

The Parable of the Prodigal Son is not just about a sinner’s return—it’s about the **Father’s love**, the **Spirit’s conviction**, and the **Son’s restoration**. It is Israel’s story, the sinner’s story, and the believer’s story.

**Doctrinally**, it shows how God restores the truly repentant.

**Dispensationally**, it pictures Israel’s rebellion and future return.

**Spiritually**, it calls every person—whether rebellious or self-righteous—to come into the Father’s joy.

The feast is ready. The door is open. The Father is watching the road.

**Will you come home?**

## **12 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Good Samaritan**

*Luke 10:25–37*

**Focus: True neighborly love; doctrinally hints at Christ's compassion toward wounded Israel**

### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is one of the most widely known stories Jesus ever told. Even people unfamiliar with the Bible recognize the term “Good Samaritan” as a symbol of kindness and compassion. At surface level, this parable teaches the ethical principle of loving one’s neighbor—a radical lesson that challenged prevailing religious and cultural norms. But deeper still, it holds prophetic, doctrinal insights that point to **Christ’s own mission**, particularly His compassion for **wounded and cast-off Israel**.

In a time when the religious elite questioned who was worthy of love, Jesus shifted the focus from “Who is my neighbor?” to “How can I be a neighbor?” The parable dismantles prejudice, legalism, and ritualistic religion by revealing that love is not theoretical—it is active, costly, and sacrificial.

Let’s explore this parable in its **practical, doctrinal, and prophetic** dimensions, beginning with the legal question that prompted it.

### **The Setup: A Loaded Question (Luke 10:25–29)**

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

The lawyer, an expert in the Mosaic Law, was not seeking truth, but testing Jesus. His question reflects the mindset of works-based righteousness—“*what shall I do?*”

Jesus, knowing his heart, responds with a question of His own:

“What is written in the law? how readest thou?”

The lawyer correctly summarizes the Law:

- **Love God with all your heart.**
- **Love your neighbor as yourself.**

Jesus affirms his answer—but adds:

“This do, and thou shalt live.”

That is, *if* you can keep it perfectly (which no one can). The Law, though holy, condemns the sinner because **no one loves perfectly**.

Trying to justify himself, the lawyer asks:

“And who is my neighbor?”

This sets the stage for Jesus’ stunning story.

### **The Parable (Luke 10:30–37)**

“A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves...”

So begins a gripping parable about violence, apathy, and mercy. It unfolds in four movements:

1. A man is wounded and left for dead.
2. Religious leaders pass by.
3. A Samaritan stops and helps.
4. Jesus calls us to go and do likewise.

Let’s examine each in detail.

### **The Wounded Man: A Picture of Fallen Humanity (and Israel)**

“...which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.”

This man, unnamed and unaided, is attacked on the 17-mile road from Jerusalem to Jericho—a route known for its danger. Symbolically, his journey “**down from Jerusalem**” mirrors a spiritual descent, away from God’s presence.

- He is **stripped** – Left exposed and humiliated.

- He is **wounded** – Victim of violence and sin.
- He is **half-dead** – Physically alive but spiritually helpless.

**Spiritually**, this man represents:

- **Every sinner**—stripped of righteousness, wounded by sin, and dying without hope.
- **Doctrinally**, he may also represent **Israel**, beaten by its enemies, robbed of its covenant blessings, and left for dead under the curse of the Law.

### **The Priest and the Levite: Religion Without Compassion**

“And by chance there came down a certain priest... likewise a Levite...”

Both the priest and the Levite were **religious leaders**:

- The **priest** served at the altar, offering sacrifices.
- The **Levite** served in the temple, maintaining its purity.

Yet both **passed by on the other side**. They did nothing.

This reveals that:

- **Religious titles don’t guarantee godly behavior.**
- **Legalism often lacks love.**
- **External righteousness** does not save the wounded.

They likely had excuses:

- Avoiding defilement (touching a corpse would make them unclean).
- Fear for their own safety.
- Belief that the man deserved his fate.

Whatever the reason, they failed to act in love. This is **religion without redemption**—the Law without grace.

Doctrinally, this represents how **the Law and temple system** could not save Israel (or man) from sin. The Law reveals sin, but cannot heal it (Romans 3:20).

### **The Good Samaritan: A Shocking Savior**

“But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was...”

This would have stunned Jesus’ audience. **Jews despised Samaritans**. They were seen as half-breeds, heretics, and enemies. To say a Samaritan helped when a priest didn’t was **scandalous**.

But this Samaritan:

- **Came to him** – Didn’t avoid or delay.
- **Had compassion** – Felt inward mercy.
- **Bound his wounds** – Applied healing.
- **Poured in oil and wine** – Symbolic of the Holy Spirit and blood.
- **Set him on his own beast** – Bore the burden himself.
- **Brought him to an inn** – A place of rest and recovery.
- **Paid for his care** – Two pence = two days’ wages, possibly foreshadowing Christ’s two-day absence (2,000 years before His return).

**This is a picture of Christ.**

Though rejected like a Samaritan (John 8:48), Jesus:

- Came **to where we were** (John 1:14).
- Had **compassion on the multitude** (Matthew 9:36).
- **Healed the brokenhearted** (Luke 4:18).
- Poured in the **oil (Spirit)** and **wine (blood)** of redemption.
- Bore us on His own “beast”—His own body.
- Brought us to the **inn**—the Church, a place of care and recovery.
- Left payment and promised to return.

Doctrinally, it speaks of Christ’s **first coming** to save the sinner and His **second coming** to complete the restoration.

**The Innkeeper: The Role of the Church**

“Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”

The **innkeeper** receives the wounded man and continues his care. This is a picture of:

- The **Church** receiving those Christ has saved.
- **Pastors and teachers**, entrusted with nurturing souls.
- The ongoing role of **discipleship**.

Jesus says, “**when I come again**”—a clear **prophetic reference** to His Second Coming.

Until then, we are stewards. We care for the broken with the **resources He left behind** (the Holy Spirit, the Word, spiritual gifts), knowing we will give account.

### **Jesus' Final Question: Who Was the Neighbor?**

Jesus finishes the parable by asking:

“Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?”

The lawyer can’t even say “the Samaritan.” He says:

“He that showed mercy on him.”

Jesus replies:

“Go, and do thou likewise.”

This parable wasn’t just a lesson—it was a **call to action**.

Jesus turned the lawyer’s question inside out. The issue isn’t identifying who qualifies as a neighbor—it’s **being one**.

### **Key Doctrinal and Spiritual Lessons**

#### **1. The Law cannot save.**

The priest and Levite show the **inability of religious systems** to restore the broken. Only **grace**, as shown by the Samaritan (Christ), can.

2. **Christ came to the wounded.**

Jesus came down the dangerous road **from heaven to earth**, to find and heal the broken.

3. **True love is sacrificial.**

Love costs time, resources, and comfort. The Samaritan didn't just feel compassion—he acted.

4. **The Church is a place of healing.**

The inn is where the broken are cared for. That's what the local church should be—**not a museum of saints, but a hospital for sinners.**

5. **Christ will return.**

He will come again, and **reward the faithful** who cared for His people in His absence.

### KJV Cross-References

- **Hosea 6:1** – “Come, and let us return unto the LORD: for he hath torn, and he will heal us...”
- **Isaiah 61:1** – “He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted...”
- **Romans 5:6** – “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.”
- **Galatians 6:2** – “Bear ye one another’s burdens...”
- **James 2:17** – “Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.”
- **Revelation 22:12** – “Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me...”

### Parable Breakdown Summary

Character	Symbolizes
Wounded man	The sinner; wounded Israel; fallen humanity
Priest	Religion; the Law; outward form without inward love
Levite	Temple service; religious structure unable to save

Character	Symbolizes
Samaritan	Jesus Christ—rejected, yet compassionate and saving
Oil and Wine	The Holy Spirit (oil); Christ’s blood (wine)
Beast	Christ bearing our burden
Inn	The Church; a place for care and discipleship
Innkeeper	Pastors, teachers, and believers tasked with spiritual care
Two pence	Grace sufficient for the Church Age
“When I come again”	Second Coming of Christ

### Spiritual Application

1. **Be willing to get involved.**  
Don’t pass by pain. Move toward it. That’s the heart of Christ.
2. **Don’t let religion blind you.**  
The priest and Levite had titles but no love. Avoid cold religion.
3. **Love those you naturally resist.**  
Samaritans and Jews hated each other, yet the Samaritan loved. True love breaks through tribalism, politics, race, and pride.
4. **Show mercy, not just morality.**  
Doctrine matters—but mercy manifests Christ to the world.
5. **Serve until Christ returns.**  
Care for the wounded. Tend to the hurting. Jesus will return—and He’ll repay.

### Conclusion

The Parable of the Good Samaritan is more than a moral tale—it is a vivid gospel portrait.

**Doctrinally**, it teaches that **Christ alone** can heal the sinner and restore what religion cannot.

**Dispensationally**, it hints at Israel’s brokenness and the Church’s current responsibility in

the absence of the King.

**Spiritually**, it reminds us that **love is active**, and neighborliness is not about boundaries, but about mercy.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho is dangerous. Along it lie many wounded souls. Will we walk by, or will we pour in oil and wine?

Jesus' command remains:

**“Go, and do thou likewise.”**

### **13 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Unjust Steward**

*Luke 16:1–13*

**Focus: Wise preparation for eternity; unique dispensational and financial implications**

#### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Unjust Steward, found in Luke 16:1–13, is among the most perplexing and misunderstood of all Jesus' parables. On the surface, it seems to commend dishonest behavior. How could Jesus, the righteous Son of God, praise a man who manipulated accounts and acted deceptively? Yet a closer look reveals that the Lord wasn't praising dishonesty, but **shrewdness**—the wise and urgent preparation for what lies ahead.

Unlike the parables of mercy and restoration that precede it, this parable deals with **financial stewardship, eternal perspective, and faithfulness in worldly resources**. It was addressed not just to the disciples but also within earshot of the **Pharisees**, who were described in verse 14 as “covetous.” This reveals that the parable serves both as a lesson to the believer and a rebuke to the self-righteous religious elite.

Beyond the practical financial wisdom, the parable offers profound **dispensational insights**, a picture of **Israel's failed stewardship**, and a call to believers to use **temporal means for eternal purposes**.

Let us unpack this layered parable with care and reverence.

#### **The Parable (Luke 16:1–13)**

“And he said also unto his disciples,  
There was a certain rich man, which had a steward;  
and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods...”

From this opening line, we are introduced to a drama involving a master, a steward, and an accusation. The steward is about to lose his position. What follows is a crisis, a cunning plan, and Christ’s surprising commentary on what we are meant to learn.

Let’s explore the story step by step.

### **The Steward’s Crisis: Accused and Exposed**

The steward is responsible for managing the rich man’s goods—much like a modern financial manager or administrator. However, he has been **wasteful**, and word has reached the master.

“...he had wasted his goods...”

The term “wasted” echoes the language used in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:13). This steward was not accused of embezzling but of **squandering**—a failure in faithful oversight.

The master says:

“Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.” (v. 2)

This is a reckoning—a moment of **accountability**. It speaks of:

- A coming end to earthly opportunities.
- A call to give an account of what was entrusted.
- The reality of stewardship: we are managers, not owners.

Doctrinally, this is a call to **Israel**, who was entrusted with the “oracles of God” (Romans 3:2) and the covenant blessings but proved unfaithful. Spiritually, it is a call to **all believers**, who must give an account at the **Judgment Seat of Christ** (Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

### **The Steward’s Plan: Urgent Preparation**

Facing dismissal, the steward considers his options:

“What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship:  
I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.” (v. 3)

He is not young or strong enough to labor, nor humble enough to beg. So he devises a plan:

“I am resolved what to do,  
that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.” (v. 4)

He calls in his master’s debtors and **reduces their debts**:

- One owes 100 measures of oil—he cuts it to 50.
- Another owes 100 measures of wheat—he reduces it to 80.

Why? To **gain favor** with them, so that they will help him when he’s unemployed. This is **strategic generosity** using someone else’s resources.

This may appear unethical, but note:

- The steward is not stealing; he is **cutting the interest or commission** that was likely his due.
- The master doesn’t reverse the changes; instead, he **commends the steward**—not for dishonesty, but for **wise foresight**.

### **Jesus' Commentary: Commending Wisdom, Not Wickedness**

“And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely...” (v. 8)

Jesus is not saying we should be unjust—rather, He highlights how **even worldly people know how to plan for their future**. The steward acted with:

- **Urgency**
- **Foresight**
- **Resourcefulness**
- **Purpose**

Jesus adds:

“For the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” (v. 8)

This is a rebuke. **Worldly people** often show more savvy and effort for temporary gain than **believers** do for eternal reward.

## Key Spiritual Lessons

### 1. Stewardship of Earthly Wealth for Eternal Gain

“Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” (v. 9)

Jesus is teaching that **money (“mammon”) is not evil in itself**, but **a tool**. Believers are to use it to:

- Invest in gospel work.
- Bless others in need.
- Further the kingdom of God.

When this life “fails” (comes to an end), those we’ve blessed or helped to Christ may “receive us” joyfully in eternity.

Money is a **temporary resource**, but it can yield **eternal dividends** when used wisely.

### 2. Faithfulness in Little Equals Faithfulness in Much

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much...” (v. 10)

Earthly wealth is “least” compared to spiritual treasure. But how we handle it reflects our character.

This applies to:

- Giving
- Tithing
- Business dealings
- Contentment

If we are careless with worldly goods, how can we be trusted with heavenly riches?

### 3. God Is the True Owner

“If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man’s, who shall give you that which is your own?” (v. 12)

Everything we have—time, money, talents—is **entrusted to us by God**. We are not owners but stewards. One day, we must give an account.

## Doctrinal and Dispensational Insights

While the parable speaks personally to all believers, it has **deeper dispensational meaning**, especially when connected to Israel.

### Israel as the Unfaithful Steward

- God entrusted Israel with **His covenants, the Law**, and the **prophets**.
- Instead of being a light to the Gentiles, Israel became **self-righteous and corrupt**.
- When Christ came, they **rejected the stewardship** of the kingdom.
- As a result, stewardship passed to others (the Gentiles, the Church).

This echoes Christ's words in **Matthew 21:43**:

“The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

### A Transition to the Church Age

The parable sits at a pivotal moment in Luke's Gospel, after the Parables of the Lost and before the Rich Man and Lazarus. It reflects the **transition from Old Covenant stewardship to New Covenant grace**.

The unjust steward pictures:

- Israel's **past failure**.
- The Church's **present responsibility**.
- The individual believer's **need for readiness**.

### The Ultimate Divide: God vs. Mammon

The parable closes with a famous, hard-hitting truth:

“No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other... Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (v. 13)

This final statement clarifies the central conflict: **allegiance**. We all have a choice:

- Serve God: use money as a tool, hold it loosely, give generously.

- Serve mammon: live for possessions, comfort, and self.

You **cannot do both**. One will eventually demand loyalty over the other.

This sharp line challenges the believer to **prioritize eternity over economics**, kingdom over comfort, and faithfulness over finances.

### Symbolic Breakdown

Element	Symbolic Meaning
The Rich Man (Lord)	God the Father or Christ, the true Master
The Steward	Israel (doctrinally), or any believer (spiritually)
The Debtors	The world, in debt to God's justice
The Accounts Reduced	Merciful stewardship, reducing burdens
The Commendation	Praise for wisdom, not dishonesty
The Mammon	Earthly wealth, not inherently evil but temporarily useful
The "Everlasting Habitations"	Heaven; eternal reward

### KJV Cross-References

- **Romans 14:12** – “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
- **2 Corinthians 5:10** – “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”
- **1 Corinthians 4:2** – “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
- **Proverbs 13:22** – “A good man leaveth an inheritance...”
- **Matthew 6:19–21** – “Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”
- **James 4:14** – “What is your life? It is even a vapour...”

### Practical Application for Believers

This parable hits home for believers in real ways:

## **1. Live Like It's Temporary—Because It Is**

The steward acted when he realized his time was short. We must live with **eternal urgency**, knowing:

- Time is running out.
- Our opportunities are limited.
- Our resources are tools for ministry.

## **2. Use Earthly Wealth for Heavenly Purposes**

Support missionaries. Feed the hungry. Help the hurting. Fund the Gospel. Don't wait for "more"—use what you have.

## **3. Be Faithful in the Small Things**

Whether it's your job, money, or responsibilities—faithfulness matters. God watches the "little" things.

## **4. Prepare for the Judgment Seat of Christ**

Like the steward, you will be called to give an account. Live now for that day.

## **5. Refuse to Serve Mammon**

We live in a materialistic age. But the believer must **resist the pull of wealth**, and instead **serve God with open hands and generous hearts**.

## **The Eternal Perspective**

Jesus isn't telling us to become cunning manipulators. He's urging us to become **spiritually savvy**, knowing:

- The world is passing away.
- Money cannot follow us—but its **impact** can.
- Heaven is real. Rewards are real. Stewardship matters.

One day, our stewardship will end. **Will we be ready?**

## **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Unjust Steward is not a lesson in fraud—it's a call to **wise stewardship**, **urgent preparation**, and **eternal perspective**. Jesus praised the steward's **foresight**, not his **faults**.

**Doctrinally**, it pictures the failure of Israel to faithfully manage God's covenant resources. **Dispensationally**, it warns of accountability and signals the transition to the Church age. **Spiritually**, it challenges every believer to use temporary resources for **eternal impact**.

Money will fail. Positions will end. But what we do **today** echoes in eternity.

“Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” (Luke 16:9)

#### **14 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus**

*Luke 16:19–31*

**Focus: Life after death; literal picture of hell and Abraham's bosom before Christ's resurrection**

#### **Introduction**

Of all the stories Jesus told, few are more sobering and theologically rich than the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. More than a mere moral tale, this account opens an unparalleled window into the **afterlife prior to Christ's resurrection**, exposing the reality of **hell, torment, consciousness after death**, and a temporary place of comfort known as **Abraham's bosom**.

Unlike other parables filled with symbolic characters and imagined settings, this account is different. **It names a specific person—Lazarus**. This has led many Bible teachers to believe this is not a parable in the traditional sense, but a **historical event told in parabolic form**—a true story with layers of doctrinal application.

Regardless of its classification, this narrative affirms **critical doctrinal truths**:

- The **immediate reality** of life after death.
- A **literal hell** with fire and torment.
- A **temporary paradise** for the righteous before Christ's resurrection.

- The **finality of death**—no second chances.
- The **sufficiency of Scripture** to warn and save the living.

Let us now examine the account, its spiritual implications, and its dispensational significance in God’s redemptive timeline.

### **The Parable (Luke 16:19–31)**

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:  
And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores..."

Two men. Two lives. Two eternities.

#### **1. The Earthly Contrast: Riches vs. Rags**

Jesus begins by drawing a stark contrast between the **rich man** and **Lazarus**.

##### **The Rich Man**

- Wore **purple** and **fine linen**—symbols of wealth and nobility.
- Lived in luxury—"fared sumptuously every day."
- Had position, privilege, and pleasures of this life.

In Jewish culture, such a man would be assumed to be blessed by God. His riches would be seen as a sign of divine favor.

##### **Lazarus**

- His name means "God is my help."
- A **beggar, full of sores, laid at the gate**—physically broken and socially rejected.
- Desired only **crumbs** from the rich man’s table.
- Dogs licked his sores—adding insult to injury.

Despite his suffering, Lazarus’s name implies **faith in God**. He had nothing of earthly comfort but was known and loved by the Lord.

## 2. The Great Reversal: Death and Beyond

“And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom:

the rich man also died, and was buried;

And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments...”

Death equalizes all. The rich man, for all his status, died and was **buried**—his luxury ended. But Lazarus, though forgotten by men, was **carried by angels** to Abraham’s bosom.

Jesus paints a vivid picture of the **afterlife**, revealing that:

- There is **consciousness** after death.
- The soul departs immediately to **one of two places**.
- Earthly wealth is no indicator of spiritual security.
- Judgment is not based on **external circumstances**, but **faith and standing before God**.

## 3. Abraham’s Bosom and Hell: Two Realms in Hades

Before the resurrection of Christ, the souls of the dead went to **Sheol/Hades**—a two-compartment realm beneath the earth:

- **Abraham’s bosom** (Paradise): A place of comfort for the righteous dead.
- **Hell** (Gehenna): A place of torment for the wicked.

These two compartments are described as being **separated by a great gulf fixed** (v. 26), and yet those in one could **see** and **speak** to those in the other.

This structure is foundational to understanding Old Testament eschatology:

- The **righteous dead** (like Lazarus, Abraham, David, etc.) could not yet ascend to heaven because Christ had not yet shed His blood.
- The **wicked dead** were already in torment, awaiting the Great White Throne judgment.

After Christ’s resurrection, Scripture teaches that He **led captivity captive** (Ephesians 4:8), **emptied Abraham’s bosom**, and took the righteous to heaven:

“...He ascended up on high, he led captivity captive...” (Eph. 4:8–10)

#### 4. The Rich Man's Torment in Hell

“And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments... and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.”

This verse reveals much about hell:

- It is a place of **fire** (v. 24).
- It is a place of **torment**, not merely separation.
- The soul remains **fully conscious**, with memory, speech, and sensation.
- There is **no escape**, no second chance, no relief.
- It is **immediate upon death**—no purgatory, no soul sleep.

The rich man asks:

“...send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue...”

He begs for even **a drop of water**—a single moment of relief from agony. He also still sees Lazarus as **inferior**—a servant to do his bidding. His heart hasn't changed, only his circumstances.

#### 5. Abraham's Response: Divine Justice and Finality

“Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

Abraham's words clarify:

- The eternal state **reverses** the temporary.
- The rich man's **earthly comfort** was not evidence of God's approval.
- Lazarus's suffering was not a sign of God's abandonment.
- There is a **fixed gulf**—eternal separation between saved and lost.
- No one can pass between the two realms (v. 26).

This directly refutes many modern heresies:

- **Universalism** – The idea that all will be saved is false.

- **Annihilationism** – The soul does not cease to exist.
- **Purgatory** – There is no middle place for further cleansing.

## 6. The Rich Man's Second Request: Warn My Family

“Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house...

For I have five brethren...”

The rich man, now fully convinced of the reality of hell, becomes an evangelist—from hell. He begs Abraham to send someone to **warn his brothers**, lest they join him in torment.

But Abraham replies:

“They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.”

In other words, **they already have the Scriptures**—the Law and the Prophets. That is sufficient.

Still, the rich man protests:

“Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.”

He argues that a miraculous sign would surely convince them. But Abraham shuts the door on that hope:

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (v. 31)

This prophetic statement anticipates the rejection of **Jesus Himself**, who **did rise from the dead**, yet was still rejected by the same class of religious elites.

## Doctrinal Truths Revealed

This “parable” reveals essential doctrines:

### 1. The Reality of Hell

Hell is not symbolic. Jesus described it with specific details—fire, thirst, torment, separation, memory, and permanence.

### 2. The Nature of the Afterlife

The moment a person dies, their soul goes **immediately** to a conscious destination:

- Heaven (now, after Christ's resurrection)
- Hell (unchanged and still active)

There is **no soul sleep**, no annihilation, and no reincarnation.

### 3. The Finality of Death

The rich man's eternal state was fixed. He could not change it after death. Likewise, once a person dies, their destiny is sealed:

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27)

### 4. The Sufficiency of Scripture

Miracles don't save people—**truth does**. The Word of God is sufficient to lead a man to salvation:

"Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." (Romans 10:17)

## Symbolic & Prophetic Layers

This account also carries **dispensational implications**:

- **Lazarus** represents the **righteous remnant of Israel**, suffering on earth, but awaiting eternal comfort.
- **The rich man** pictures **apostate Israel**, especially the religious leaders—rich in tradition, bankrupt in truth.
- The **five brothers** may symbolize the five sons of Leah (Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, and Issachar), representing the **unbelieving majority**.
- **Abraham's bosom** represents the **temporary holding place** for the righteous dead until Christ's atonement.

After Christ's resurrection, Abraham's bosom was emptied, and believers now go directly into the presence of the Lord:

"Absent from the body... present with the Lord." (2 Corinthians 5:8)

## KJV Cross-References

- **Ecclesiastes 12:7** – “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”
- **Daniel 12:2** – “Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake...”
- **Matthew 25:46** – “These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”
- **Revelation 20:13–15** – The Great White Throne Judgment; death and hell cast into the lake of fire.
- **Hebrews 9:27** – “It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”
- **Ephesians 4:8–10** – “He led captivity captive...”

### Spiritual Application

1. **This life is not all there is.**  
There is a real, eternal existence after death. How you respond to Christ now determines where you will spend it.
2. **Don't mistake riches for righteousness.**  
Wealth, position, and health are not signs of divine favor. Neither are poverty or sickness signs of judgment.
3. **You only get one chance.**  
There are no second chances after death. Today is the day of salvation.
4. **The Bible is enough.**  
Don't wait for a miracle or a sign. You have the Word of God. That's all you need.
5. **Reach your family while there is time.**  
The rich man cared too late. Don't wait to share the Gospel with your loved ones.

### Conclusion

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus is not fiction—it is a **theological revelation**. Jesus pulled back the veil to show what lies **beyond the grave: torment or comfort, judgment or joy, eternal separation or eternal life**.

**Doctrinally**, it exposes the reality of hell, the need for repentance, and the finality of judgment.

**Dispensationally**, it paints a picture of Israel's spiritual state and the transitional shift after Christ's resurrection.

**Spiritually**, it pleads with every listener: **choose now whom you will serve**.

There is no repentance after death. No salvation in hell. No crossing the gulf.

But there is still time now.

“If they hear not Moses and the prophets,  
neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” (Luke 16:31)

He did rise. Will you be persuaded?

### **15 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Friend at Midnight**

*Luke 11:5–13*

**Focus: Persistence in prayer; tribulational encouragement to Israel**

#### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Friend at Midnight is a striking lesson on the power of **persistent prayer** and the **character of God**. Delivered immediately after Jesus taught His disciples the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11, this parable expands the theme of prayer from content (what to pray) to attitude (how to pray). It emphasizes that God is not reluctant, but that **persistence in prayer reveals faith**, deepens our dependence, and is especially vital for a nation or individual under distress.

Though applicable to believers in every age, this parable carries **doctrinal weight for Israel during the Tribulation**. It is a message of hope for those who find themselves in spiritual midnight—desperate, surrounded by enemies, and in urgent need of divine help.

Jesus uses a simple, relatable scenario—one friend knocking at another's door at midnight—to convey eternal truth. Through this humble story, He teaches that even flawed human relationships can result in answered requests through persistence. How much more will a perfect and loving Father respond to the heartfelt cries of His children?

Let us explore the parable in detail, mining its **spiritual, doctrinal, and dispensational** riches.

#### **The Parable (Luke 11:5–8)**

“And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend,  
and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him,  
Friend, lend me three loaves;  
For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me,  
and I have nothing to set before him?  
And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not:  
the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed;  
I cannot rise and give thee.  
I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend,  
yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.”

### 1. The Scene: A Desperate Request at an Inconvenient Hour

The parable begins with a man receiving a **surprise visitor** at **midnight**—a time of darkness, difficulty, and delay. In ancient Jewish culture, hospitality was a sacred duty. To fail to provide food for a guest—even unexpectedly—would bring shame and dishonor.

The host, having nothing to offer, **goes to his neighbor**—not out of convenience, but **desperation**. He asks for **three loaves**, a modest request, not for himself but for another.

Key themes emerge immediately:

- **Desperation** – The man comes because he is empty.
- **Midnight** – Symbolic of spiritual crisis or tribulation.
- **Intercession** – He is asking not for himself, but for someone else.
- **Importunity** – Persistent knocking, even when inconvenient.

### 2. The Reluctant Friend: Human Hesitation

The friend initially responds with excuses:

“Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed...”

He doesn’t want to be bothered. Though they are friends, the relationship alone is not enough to compel him to rise.

This is a **deliberate contrast**. Jesus is not comparing God to a reluctant friend, but **contrasting** Him with one:

- The reluctant friend helps only because of persistence.
- God, in contrast, is **eager and willing** to help His children.
- If persistence moves a flawed man, **how much more will God be moved?**

### 3. The Turning Point: Importunity

“...yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.”

The key word here is **importunity**—bold, shameless persistence. It implies:

- **Continued knocking**, despite being turned away.
- **Boldness**, even at the risk of offense.
- **Faith**, that persistence will be rewarded.

This word only appears once in the New Testament—here. Jesus singles it out as the reason the man gets what he needs.

God is not impressed with eloquence in prayer, but **earnestness, faith, and unrelenting pursuit**. This echoes James 5:16:

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

### 4. The Application (Luke 11:9–13)

Jesus follows the parable with three powerful commands:

“Ask, and it shall be given you;  
seek, and ye shall find;  
knock, and it shall be opened unto you.”

These are not passive suggestions—they are **imperative and progressive**:

- **Ask** – Speak the request (prayer).
- **Seek** – Pursue God’s will actively.
- **Knock** – Persist when the door is shut.

All three imply **faith** and **persistence**, not a one-time wish. The verbs in Greek are present continuous: “keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.”

Jesus then appeals to **natural human relationships**:

- Earthly fathers give good gifts to their children.
- Even though sinful, they don't give stones for bread or scorpions for eggs.

Then comes the climax:

“How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (v. 13)

This not only affirms God's **readiness to give**, but identifies the **greatest gift**—the **Holy Spirit** Himself.

## 5. Doctrinal Focus: Israel in the Tribulation

While this parable speaks to all believers, it has a **doctrinal application to Israel**, especially in the context of the **Great Tribulation**.

Throughout Scripture, midnight often represents a time of **divine intervention during crisis**:

- **Exodus 12:29** – God struck Egypt's firstborn at midnight.
- **Matthew 25:6** – “At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh...”

In the Tribulation:

- Israel is surrounded by enemies (Psalm 83; Zechariah 14).
- The Antichrist seeks to destroy her (Revelation 12).
- Many Jews will **flee to the wilderness** and **cry out to God**.

This parable offers hope: those who knock **in the dark** will be answered. Even when it seems God is silent or delayed, **persistence will be rewarded**. The tribulational remnant, like the importunate man, will prevail through prayer.

This aligns with **Luke 18:7**:

“And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him...?”

## 6. Prophetic Imagery: The Friend, the Loaves, and the Midnight Cry

Let us explore the prophetic symbols more closely:

Symbol	Represents
Friend at midnight	Tribulational Israel or any earnest intercessor
Journeying guest	The remnant or weary soul in need of help
Three loaves	Bread of life, spiritual nourishment, complete provision
Midnight	Crisis point in human history (Tribulation; spiritual urgency)
Sleeping neighbor	Human limitations; a foil to God's faithfulness
Importunity	Persistent prayer under persecution

### KJV Cross-References

- **Psalm 55:17** – “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud...”
- **Isaiah 62:6-7** – “...ye that make mention of the LORD, keep not silence... till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”
- **Matthew 7:7-11** – Parallel passage affirming God's generosity.
- **Hebrews 4:16** – “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace...”
- **James 5:16** – “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”
- **Revelation 6:9-10** – Martyrs crying out in prayer under the altar.

### Spiritual Lessons for the Believer Today

While the doctrinal setting leans toward Israel in the Tribulation, the spiritual application is universal. Prayer is not about moving a reluctant God, but aligning our hearts with a God who **delights to give**.

#### 1. Don't Give Up in Prayer

Delay is not denial. Keep knocking. Keep asking. Breakthroughs often come after the darkest hour.

#### 2. Boldness Honors God

God invites bold, shameless petitions. We are not beggars—we are children of the King.

### **3. Intercessory Prayer is Powerful**

The man prayed not for himself, but for his guest. True prayer often reaches beyond self-interest into **intercession for others**.

### **4. God Answers Better Than We Ask**

The man wanted bread. God offers the **Holy Spirit**—not only gifts, but **the Giver Himself**.

### **5. Midnight Moments Are Opportunities**

Your crisis may be your most fruitful moment. Spiritual hunger, when met with persistent prayer, becomes a platform for God's power.

## **The Progression of Prayer: Ask, Seek, Knock**

Jesus lays out a progression:

- **Asking** – The beginning of prayer.
- **Seeking** – Active pursuit; study, obedience.
- **Knocking** – Refusing to quit; pushing through resistance.

Each step involves **deeper engagement** and **greater intimacy** with God. Many stop at asking. Few seek. Even fewer knock until the door opens.

## **Jesus' Contrast with the Sleeping Friend**

It's vital to remember that the friend in the house is a **contrast** to God, not a comparison. God is:

- **Never sleeping** (Psalm 121:4).
- **Never reluctant** to give (James 1:5).
- **Never annoyed** by our petitions.

If persistence works on reluctant men, how much more will **faith-filled prayer** touch the heart of our **gracious heavenly Father**?

## Connection to the Lord's Prayer

This parable follows the Lord's Prayer in Luke 11:2–4. It is not a coincidence.

- **The Lord's Prayer** gives us the **form** of prayer.
- **The Parable of the Friend** gives us the **force** of prayer.

Jesus teaches not just **what to say**, but **how to say it—with fervency and faith**.

## Foreshadowing of the Holy Spirit

The parable concludes with Jesus promising the Holy Spirit:

“How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?”

In the Tribulation, Israel will desperately cry out for God's Spirit (see Joel 2:28–32). In the Church Age, believers are **sealed with the Spirit** at salvation, but we still pray for the **Spirit's filling, guidance, and power**.

The emphasis here is not just on **what God gives**, but **who** He gives. The greatest answer to prayer is **God Himself**.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Friend at Midnight is more than a lesson in tenacity—it is a call to **trust God's character**, to **pray with boldness**, and to **stand firm in the midnight hour**.

**Doctrinally**, it points to Israel in the Tribulation—desperate, surrounded, but not abandoned.

**Dispensationally**, it assures God's covenant people that **He hears**, even in the darkest hour.

**Spiritually**, it calls every believer to **importunity**—fervent, persistent, faith-filled prayer.

When your cupboard is bare...

When your midnight guest arrives...

When your prayers seem unanswered...

Keep knocking.

Because on the other side of that door is not a reluctant neighbor...

...but a Father who delights to give.

## **16 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Unjust Judge**

*Luke 18:1–8*

**Focus: God’s justice in avenging His elect—doctrinally Tribulation context**

### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Unjust Judge (also known as the Parable of the Persistent Widow) is one of Jesus’ most profound teachings on the topic of **persistent prayer and divine justice**. Though it is frequently preached as a general lesson about never giving up in prayer—and rightly so—this parable carries a far deeper **doctrinal application** that points toward a future time of **great tribulation** when God’s elect cry out for justice.

Jesus taught this parable in Luke 18 immediately after discussing His return in chapter 17, anchoring it in an **eschatological context**. While the parable offers spiritual encouragement to any believer facing delay or injustice, its core focus is God’s final answer to the cries of **His elect**, especially **Israel during the Tribulation**, as they endure persecution and await deliverance.

Jesus uses a story involving a corrupt human judge to draw a sharp contrast: if even the most unjust human systems can yield results under pressure, **how much more** will a righteous God answer the persistent cries of His people?

### **The Parable (Luke 18:1–8)**

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end,  
that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;  
Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:  
And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying,  
Avenge me of mine adversary.  
And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself,  
Though I fear not God, nor regard man;  
Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her,  
lest by her continual coming she weary me.  
And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.  
And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him,  
though he bear long with them?

I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.

Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

### 1. Purpose of the Parable: Pray and Don't Faint

Luke introduces the parable with a unique narrative note:

“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;” (v. 1)

Jesus gives the **motive up front**: perseverance in prayer and refusal to lose heart. The implication is that **delays** in divine response will tempt many to **give up**. Yet faith is not proven by immediate results but by **continued belief despite silence**.

This is especially relevant to Israel in the **future Tribulation**—when God's people will be crying out under intense persecution, famine, betrayal, and martyrdom.

### 2. The Characters: A Judge and a Widow

Jesus presents two primary figures to carry the weight of the parable:

#### The Unjust Judge

- **Feared not God** – He has no spiritual compass.
- **Regarded not man** – He lacks human compassion.
- Represents the worst kind of authority: **godless, selfish, indifferent**.

#### The Widow

- In Jewish society, a widow was among the most **vulnerable** individuals—without a husband, legal power, or means of protection.
- Her only recourse was to **appeal to a judge** for justice.
- She had **no leverage**, no bribe to offer—only **her persistence**.

### 3. The Conflict: Avenge Me of My Adversary

The widow's cry is not vague or casual—it is a legal plea:

“Avenge me of mine adversary.”

She is being **wronged**, and she appeals to the court for **vindication**.

The phrase “avenge me” uses the Greek word *ekdikeō*, which means **to vindicate, to carry out justice, or exact retribution**. This is not a prayer for comfort—it’s a demand for righteous justice in the face of oppression.

This parallels the prayers of the saints in **Revelation 6:10**:

“How long, O Lord, holy and true,  
dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?”

#### **4. The Delay: He Would Not for a While**

“And he would not for a while...”

This delay introduces **tension** in the parable. Even though she asks repeatedly, the judge remains **unmoved**—not out of legal reason, but out of indifference.

This is the experience of many of God’s people—especially in times of **deep trial**. They pray... and God seems silent.

But **delay is not denial**. Jesus includes this to **mirror our experience** of unanswered prayers—and to **contrast** God’s justice with this corrupt judge.

#### **5. The Turning Point: Because She Troubled Me**

Eventually, the judge concedes:

“Though I fear not God, nor regard man;  
Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her...”

He yields not from righteousness, but because her **persistence wears him down**.

The Greek phrase “lest by her continual coming she weary me” is vivid. It literally means **“lest she beat me down”**—it carries the image of being black-eyed or battered.

This is a **satirical exaggeration** to make a theological point:

- If even a **corrupt** man will respond to **persistence**, how much more will a **righteous** God act out of love and justice?

#### **6. The Lord’s Commentary: Hear What the Unjust Judge Saith**

Jesus now transitions from story to spiritual application:

“And shall not God avenge his own elect,  
which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?” (v. 7)

Here, Jesus introduces:

- **God's character** – Unlike the judge, God is holy and just.
- **God's people** – Referred to as **His elect**.
- **Their prayer** – A cry that goes up **day and night**.
- **His patience** – “Though he bear long with them...”

This verse affirms that:

- God hears the cries of His elect.
- He may bear long (wait), but He is not indifferent.
- He will bring justice **speedily** in His time.

## **7. Doctrinal Focus: God Avenging His Elect in the Tribulation**

Doctrinally, this parable points directly to the **Tribulation period**. Jesus places this parable right after His teaching on the end times in Luke 17:22–37.

The elect in this parable are:

- **Primarily Israel**—God’s covenant people (Isaiah 45:4; Romans 11:28).
- **Also includes Tribulation saints**—those saved during Daniel’s 70th week.
- **Includes the martyrs** who cry out for justice under the altar in Revelation 6.

They are:

- **Persecuted by the Antichrist** (Daniel 7:25; Revelation 13).
- **Slaughtered for their faith** (Revelation 20:4).
- **Betrayed and scattered** (Matthew 24:9–10).
- Yet they **cry out** for God’s justice day and night.

This parable promises that:

- **Justice will come.**

- God will not delay forever.
- The cries of the righteous are not forgotten.

### 8. “He Will Avenge Them Speedily”

“I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.” (v. 8)

The word “speedily” refers not to **when** God will act, but to **how swiftly** He will act **once His time has come**.

This mirrors the **bowl judgments** of Revelation 16—poured out in rapid succession.

When God moves, He moves **suddenly, decisively, and without delay**. The same God who delayed 400 years before judging Egypt (Genesis 15:13) **executed that judgment in one night** (Exodus 12:29–30).

### 9. A Sobering Question: Shall He Find Faith on the Earth?

Jesus ends the parable with a haunting rhetorical question:

“Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

This isn’t doubt about God’s ability—it’s a **challenge to us**.

It implies:

- **Faith may be rare** at His return.
- Many will **grow weary** in waiting.
- Some may **fall away**, discouraged by delays.
- **True faith endures** despite silence, persecution, and waiting.

This is especially pointed toward **Israel during the Tribulation**, but also applies to any believer in any age: **Will you keep praying and believing—even when God seems silent?**

### Prophetic Layers and Symbolism

Element	Symbolic Meaning
Unjust Judge	Contrasted image to God's justice
Widow	Picture of helplessness; Israel during Tribulation
"Avenge me"	Cry for justice, not comfort
Delay	God's long-suffering and divine timing
Speedy vengeance	Sudden wrath at Christ's return (Revelation 19)
Cry day and night	Continuous intercession by saints and martyrs
"Shall He find faith?"	End-time apostasy and remnant faithfulness

### KJV Cross-References

- **Isaiah 63:4** – “For the day of vengeance is in mine heart...”
- **Romans 12:19** – “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.”
- **Revelation 6:10** – “How long, O Lord... dost thou not judge and avenge our blood?”
- **Psalms 9:12** – “He forgetteth not the cry of the humble.”
- **Matthew 24:13** – “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.”

### Spiritual Lessons for the Church Today

Though doctrinally the parable points to the Tribulation, the **spiritual lessons** are timeless.

#### 1. God Is Not Like the Unjust Judge

God is holy, loving, and just. He does not answer prayers out of annoyance, but out of compassion.

#### 2. Persistence in Prayer is a Sign of Faith

True faith **does not faint**. It holds on—even in silence.

#### 3. Delay Is Not Denial

Just because God “bears long” does not mean He is ignoring you. Wait for His timing.

#### 4. Justice Belongs to God

We are not called to take vengeance into our own hands. We pray, trust, and leave justice to Him.

#### 5. Prayer is Powerful—Even When Unanswered

The widow had no status, no allies, and no bribe. Her weapon was **persistent petition**. And it worked.

#### Conclusion

The Parable of the Unjust Judge is a beacon of hope for the persecuted, the ignored, and the afflicted. It teaches that **God hears** the cries of His people—even when the world is unjust, even when heaven is silent.

**Doctrinally**, it offers assurance to **Israel and Tribulation saints**—God will avenge their blood.

**Dispensationally**, it highlights the coming **judgment and justice at Christ’s return**.

**Spiritually**, it calls believers of all ages to **pray always, and not faint**.

When the midnight cry rises from the oppressed, the heavens will not be silent forever. Justice will come. Vengeance will fall. The Judge of all the earth **will do right**.

And so Jesus asks us:

“When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

Let your answer be: **“Yes, Lord—you will find it in me.”**

### **17 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican**

*Luke 18:9–14*

**Focus: Justification by humility versus self-righteousness**

#### Introduction

Among Jesus’ many teachings, none more vividly contrasts **God’s view of righteousness** with man’s than the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. In just six short verses, Jesus

shatters centuries of religious pride and legalism, declaring that **justification before God is not about works, comparison, or outward performance, but about humble repentance and faith.**

This parable is not merely a moral lesson—it is a gospel cornerstone. It exposes the **spiritual blindness of self-righteousness** and exalts the **undeserving sinner who casts himself on God’s mercy**. It also serves as a warning: not all who go to the temple (or church) come away justified. This message is especially crucial in an age where many trust in their religiosity or moral superiority rather than the mercy of God.

Let us now explore this parable’s context, contrast, doctrinal depth, and spiritual implications.

## 1. Context and Purpose of the Parable

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others.”

(Luke 18:9)

Jesus introduces the parable with a clear target audience—those who:

- **Trusted in themselves** for righteousness.
- **Despised others** as less holy, less spiritual, or less worthy.

This was the **defining trait of the Pharisees**—the religious elite who believed their meticulous law-keeping made them superior. But it is also the default position of human pride. Anyone who compares themselves to others to feel justified fits the description.

This parable serves to **expose the false security of self-righteousness** and point to the **only path to true justification**—humble faith in God’s mercy.

## 2. The Pharisee: A Portrait of Self-Righteousness

“The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.”

(Luke 18:11–12)

This Pharisee did not approach God with a broken heart, but with a **spiritual résumé**. Note his posture, his prayer, and his pride.

### A. Stood and Prayed “With Himself”

- The phrase “with himself” implies **isolation**—this wasn’t communion with God, but **self-congratulation**.
- He stood confidently, likely in a visible place.

### B. The Substance of His Prayer

- He thanks God, but not for grace or mercy—instead, for **his own superiority**.
- He **compares himself** to others—extortioners, adulterers, and specifically the **publican** next to him.
- He boasts of his **religious performance**:
  - **Fasting** twice a week (above what the Law required).
  - **Tithing** everything, even beyond requirement.

### C. The Problem: Self-Exaltation

- This man sees himself as **the standard**, not a sinner in need.
- He views others with **contempt**, which proves he doesn’t understand his own depravity.
- His prayer contains **no confession, no repentance, and no request for mercy**.

He is a religious man—but he is spiritually blind.

## 3. The Publican: A Picture of Humble Repentance

“And the publican, standing afar off,  
would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven,  
but smote upon his breast, saying,  
God be merciful to me a sinner.”  
(Luke 18:13)

Publicans were **tax collectors**—hated by Jews for collaborating with Rome and often associated with extortion and greed. Spiritually and socially, they were the **lowest of the low**.

## A. His Posture

- He stands **afar off**—he does not feel worthy to draw near.
- He **will not lift up his eyes**—a sign of **humility** and **shame**.
- He **smotes his breast**—a rare expression of deep grief and guilt (cf. Luke 23:48).

## B. His Prayer

“God be merciful to me a sinner.”

Seven words. No performance. No boasting. Just a cry for **mercy**. The Greek phrase used here—*hilastheti moi*—is related to the idea of **atonement** or **propitiation**. He isn't just asking for general kindness; he's asking God to **apply the blood**, to **cover his sin**, and to **make him right**.

This is the prayer of one who sees **no hope in himself**, but throws himself entirely on **God's grace**.

## 4. Jesus' Shocking Verdict

“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”  
(Luke 18:14)

Jesus' conclusion would have **scandalized His audience**. In their eyes:

- The **Pharisee** was righteous, respectable, and law-abiding.
- The **Publican** was vile, traitorous, and unclean.

But in God's eyes:

- The Pharisee was **unjustified**—still in his sins.
- The Publican was **justified**—declared righteous before God.

This is the **doctrine of justification by grace through faith**—long before Paul expounds it in Romans. Jesus teaches that **sinners are made right with God not by works, but by humble, believing hearts** that plead for mercy.

## 5. Doctrinal Significance: Justification by Faith Alone

This parable is a vivid illustration of **Romans 3:23–28**:

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;  
Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...  
Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.”

### **A. What Is Justification?**

Justification is God’s legal declaration that a sinner is **righteous** in His sight—based not on the sinner’s merit, but on **faith in His provision**.

The publican was justified because:

- He admitted he was a **sinner**.
- He cried out for **mercy**.
- He trusted in **God’s provision**, not in himself.

### **B. The Pharisee’s Fatal Error**

The Pharisee, by contrast:

- **Trusted in himself**.
- **Relied on works**.
- **Boasted of superiority**.

He had **religion without redemption, law without love, and pride instead of penitence**.

## **6. Dispensational Application**

While this parable is deeply personal, it also has **national implications for Israel**. Throughout the Gospels, the **Pharisees** represent **apostate Israel**—those who rejected their need for a Savior and instead boasted in their Abrahamic lineage and Mosaic obedience.

The **publicans and sinners**, on the other hand, represent the **remnant**—those who, like the tax collector, knew they were spiritually bankrupt and turned to Christ.

Jesus had already said in Matthew 21:31:

“Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

This parable is a microcosm of Israel's response to Christ:

- The **religious elite** rejected Him.
- The **lowly and broken** received Him with joy.

It foreshadows the **partial blindness** of Israel (Romans 11:25), and the inclusion of the humble, both Jew and Gentile, into Christ's body.

### 7. Key Contrasts in the Parable

<b>Pharisee</b>	<b>Publican</b>
Stood in self-confidence	Stood afar off
Eyes lifted in pride	Eyes cast down in humility
Boasted in works	Pleaded for mercy
Compared himself to others	Compared himself to God
Prayed <i>with himself</i>	Prayed <i>to God</i>
Trusted in righteousness	Admitted his sinfulness
Unjustified	Justified

### 8. The Danger of Self-Righteousness

This parable strikes at the heart of **legalism**, which is rampant in every generation.

Legalism trusts in:

- Church attendance.
- Baptism or sacraments.
- Moral behavior.
- Religious background.

Yet all of these fall short. The Pharisee had religion but lacked **relationship**. He was **near the altar**, but far from **atonement**.

Self-righteousness is subtle and deadly. It doesn't always wear religious robes—it can masquerade as:

- Moral superiority.
- Denominational pride.
- Spiritual elitism.

But God resists the proud—and gives grace to the humble (James 4:6).

## **9. Spiritual Application for Believers**

### **A. Justification Is by Grace Through Faith**

This is the foundation of the Gospel. Any system that adds **works** to salvation denies the very heart of this parable.

### **B. Beware the Pharisee in Your Heart**

Even after salvation, believers must guard against spiritual pride—especially when comparing themselves to others.

### **C. Approach God in Humility**

Whether in prayer, worship, or service, come like the publican—broken, grateful, and aware of your continual need for grace.

### **D. Boasting Nullifies the Gospel**

The moment we start boasting of what we do for God rather than what He has done for us, we become like the Pharisee.

## **KJV Cross-References**

- **Isaiah 66:2** – “...to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit...”
- **Psalms 34:18** – “The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart...”
- **Romans 3:20** – “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified...”
- **Galatians 2:16** – “...a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ.”

- **James 4:6** – “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”

## 10. Christ at the Center

Jesus Himself is the basis for the publican’s justification. Though not explicitly mentioned in the parable, the **mercy** he sought was rooted in the **sacrifice of Christ**, who would soon shed His blood as the only sufficient atonement for sin.

In this sense:

- The **publican** looked forward to the cross, whether he fully understood it or not.
- We today look **back to the cross**, knowing the full price was paid.

Only by the blood of Jesus can a sinner go home **justified**.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican is a **theological thunderclap**—a rebuke to the proud, an invitation to the humble, and a roadmap to justification. It teaches that **God resists those who exalt themselves, but exalts those who humble themselves before Him.**

**Doctrinally**, it exposes the fallacy of works-based salvation.

**Dispensationally**, it previews Israel’s internal divide between the religious elite and the repentant remnant.

**Spiritually**, it reminds us all to flee from the trap of pride and cling to the mercy of God.

One man left the temple confident in himself—and lost.

One man left the temple broken before God—and justified.

Which one are you?

“God be merciful to me a sinner.”

And Jesus said, “This man went down to his house justified.”

## **18 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard**

*Matthew 20:1–16*

**Focus: God’s right to reward as He wills; deals with envy and grace**

## Introduction

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard, found in Matthew 20:1–16, stands as one of Jesus’ most profound and paradoxical teachings on the **grace of God** and **the human heart’s reaction to it**. On the surface, the parable addresses the topic of **fairness, labor,** and **rewards**, but its spiritual and doctrinal implications reach far deeper. It confronts our pride, exposes our tendency to envy, and exalts the sovereignty of God, who **rewards not based on effort, but on grace**.

This parable turns worldly logic on its head. In a culture where wages are tied to time and performance, Jesus offers a picture of a **Kingdom where the last may be first, and the first last**—not because of merit, but because of divine mercy.

It is also a parable about the **calling of God**, both to Israel and to Gentiles, and the **order of calling** throughout redemptive history. It speaks not only of laborers in a vineyard, but of how God deals with **individuals, nations, and dispensations**.

### 1. The Parable in Full (Matthew 20:1–16)

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard..."

This parable unfolds across **five stages of labor** and a surprising twist at the end.

Let’s break down the progression of the story.

### 2. The Householder: God as Master of the Vineyard

The parable begins with a “householder”—a wealthy landowner who **represents God**. The “vineyard” is His field of service, representing the **work of His kingdom** on earth.

- The householder **initiates** the work.
- He **hires** according to his will.
- He **returns** at set times to bring in more laborers.
- And finally, he **pays** them all—but not in the way they expect.

The parable begins in the **early morning**—symbolizing the **first call to service**, which doctrinally may refer to **Israel**, the first called to serve in God’s redemptive plan.

### 3. The Five Calls to Labor

The householder goes out at five different times during the day:

- **Early morning** (around 6 a.m.)
- **Third hour** (9 a.m.)
- **Sixth hour** (12 p.m.)
- **Ninth hour** (3 p.m.)
- **Eleventh hour** (5 p.m.)

At each stage, he finds men **idle**—not lazy, but waiting for an opportunity. He invites them all into his vineyard.

#### **Spiritual Application:**

- This symbolizes the various **stages of God’s call**—some are saved young, others in old age.
- It may also represent the **progressive unfolding** of God’s call through **Israel**, the **Church**, and individual believers across the **Church Age**.
- God’s call is not based on **how much** a person can contribute, but on **His mercy and purpose**.

### 4. The Agreement: One Penny for the Day

“And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.” (v. 2)

The “penny” was the standard **daily wage**—a **denarius**. It represents the **reward of eternal life** or **heavenly inheritance**, not earned, but granted by God.

- The first group receives a clear **contractual agreement**.
- The others are promised: “Whatsoever is right I will give you” (v. 4, 7)—an open-ended offer based on **the householder’s goodness**.

This sets the stage for the tension that will later arise—not because of injustice, but because of **grace that disrupts expectations**.

## 5. The Surprise Payment: Equal Wages for Unequal Hours

At the end of the day, the householder tells his steward:

“Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.” (v. 8)

This reversal of order mirrors **Matthew 19:30** and **20:16**—“the last shall be first, and the first last.”

To everyone’s shock:

- The **eleventh-hour workers**, who labored only one hour, receive a **full day’s wage**.
- Those who worked all day **expect more**—but they receive the **same**.

## 6. The Complaint: A Cry for Fairness

“They murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us...” (v. 11–12)

This cry is deeply human—it’s a **grievance based on comparison**.

Key words: "**made them equal unto us**."

The long-time workers:

- Do not accuse the householder of wrongdoing.
- Do not deny that they got what was agreed.
- Their grievance is rooted in **envy**, not injustice.

Their problem is not that they received too little, but that others—who they deem less deserving—received **as much**.

## 7. The Householder’s Response: God’s Sovereignty and Grace

“Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

Take that thine is, and go thy way:

I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?  
Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (v. 13–15)

This response exposes the **heart of the parable**:

- **God is not unjust** in giving grace to others.
- **He keeps His promises** to all.
- **He has the right** to dispense His goodness as He pleases.

The “evil eye” (v. 15) is a Hebrew idiom for **envy**. These laborers begrudge generosity, thinking that others’ blessings diminish their own.

But God’s grace is not **a pie to be divided**, but **a well that never runs dry**.

## 8. “So the Last Shall Be First, and the First Last”

This statement, bookending the parable (Matthew 19:30 and 20:16), encapsulates the kingdom principle that **God’s ways are not man’s ways** (Isaiah 55:8–9).

**Doctrinal Layer:**

- The **Jews** (early laborers) expected **greater reward** because they had the covenants, the Law, and centuries of service.
- But the **Gentiles**, brought into the fold later, received the **same eternal life**.
- God’s offer of grace is **equally extended**, regardless of national origin or timing.

**Spiritual Layer:**

- Those saved early in life or ministry must not envy those saved later.
- God is just as pleased to give eternal life to the thief on the cross as to the apostle who labors for decades.

## 9. Doctrinal Significance: Grace, Not Merit

This parable demolishes every system that tries to **earn God’s favor**. It teaches:

- **Salvation is not based on length of service, but on the Master’s call.**
- **Rewards are dispensed at His discretion**, not according to our comparison charts.

- **Grace offends human pride**—because it leaves no room for boasting.

This message is vital for both **Jews who struggled with Gentile inclusion** in the early Church, and for **modern Christians** who may think their works entitle them to greater favor.

As Paul writes in Romans 11:6:

“And if by grace, then is it no more of works...”

## 10. Lessons for Today’s Church

### A. Don’t Compare Your Calling

Some are called early, some late. Some serve in obscurity, others in the spotlight. But all receive the same **salvation** and are loved equally by God.

### B. Rejoice in God’s Generosity

Grace to others is not loss to you. Celebrate every soul saved—whether it happens at age 7 or on a deathbed.

### C. Beware of the Envious Spirit

When someone receives blessing, opportunity, or praise—check your heart. Do you rejoice or resent? That is the test of humility.

### D. God’s Rewards Are His to Give

There is no heavenly payroll system based on hours punched. Everything is by **grace**, even **crowns** and **rewards** (2 Timothy 4:8).

## 11. KJV Cross-References

- **Isaiah 55:8–9** – “For my thoughts are not your thoughts...”
- **Romans 4:4–5** – “To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt...”
- **Titus 3:5** – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done...”
- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – “For by grace are ye saved through faith...”
- **1 Corinthians 3:8** – “Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.”

- **2 Timothy 4:8** – “...a crown of righteousness, which the Lord...shall give me at that day.”

## 12. Symbolic Breakdown

Symbol	Meaning
Householder	God the Father or Christ, Master of the Kingdom
Vineyard	God’s work; the field of souls and service
Laborers	Believers; Israel and Gentiles; early and late converts
Penny (denarius)	Salvation or reward of eternal life (granted by grace)
Hours (3rd, 6th, etc.)	Callings across ages; dispensational timings
Murmuring laborers	Self-righteous or envious believers; early Israelite response
Evil eye	Envy; spiritual pride; resenting God’s generosity

## 13. Christ at the Center

Ultimately, this parable exalts **Christ as the gracious Master** who calls laborers into His field—not based on their résumé, but on His mercy.

The workers had no power to hire themselves. They were idle until He came. He provided:

- The **call**,
- The **vineyard**,
- The **wages**,
- And the **mercy** to make them equal.

This echoes Jesus’ words in John 15:16:

“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you...”

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard is a **symphony of grace**, composed to humble the proud, encourage the latecomer, and silence the murmurer.

**Doctrinally**, it affirms God's right to call and reward as He chooses, in every dispensation.

**Spiritually**, it rebukes our tendency to compare, complain, and calculate instead of simply trusting God.

**Eternally**, it declares that no one earns the Kingdom—it is all **grace from first to last**.

The next time envy tempts you to murmur, remember the Master's question:

“Is thine eye evil, because I am good?”

Let your answer be:

**“No, Lord—Your grace is enough.”**

### **19 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Two Sons**

*Matthew 21:28–32*

**Focus: Israel's lip service vs. the obedience of sinners who repent**

#### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Two Sons, found in Matthew 21:28–32, is one of the shortest of Christ's parables—yet it strikes directly at the heart of what true obedience means in the eyes of God. In this piercing story, Jesus confronts the **religious hypocrisy** of the Jewish leaders, contrasts their empty words with the repentant actions of publicans and harlots, and exposes how **lip service is not the same as obedience**.

This parable was delivered during the final week of Christ's earthly ministry, amid rising hostility from the chief priests, elders, and Pharisees. As Jesus enters Jerusalem and teaches in the temple, He confronts the leaders of Israel directly with a challenge: **“Which of the two did the will of his father?”** The answer is clear—but the implications are damning.

This parable reveals the contrast between **profession and performance, rejection and repentance**, and ultimately between **dead religion** and **living faith**. Doctrinally, it pictures the **failures of Israel's leadership**, the **inclusion of repentant sinners**, and the nature of **true righteousness**.

Let's examine the structure, message, context, and application of this convicting parable.

## 1. The Parable Text (Matthew 21:28–32)

“But what think ye? A certain man had two sons;  
and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard.  
He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went.  
And he came to the second, and said likewise.  
And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.  
Whether of them twain did the will of his father?  
They say unto him, The first.  
Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you,  
That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.”

## 2. Context: A Clash in the Temple

This parable was not spoken in a vacuum—it came amid **a confrontation**.

In the verses prior (Matthew 21:23–27), the chief priests and elders challenge Jesus’ authority. Instead of answering directly, Jesus poses a question about John the Baptist, which they refuse to answer. Then, without missing a beat, He gives them this parable.

The setup is powerful:

- Jesus has just entered Jerusalem triumphantly.
- He has cleansed the temple.
- Now He speaks with full authority, knowing His time is short.
- This parable is aimed squarely at the **religious elite**—those who claim obedience but do not do the will of the Father.

## 3. The Two Sons: A Tale of Contrast

### First Son

- **Initial response:** “I will not.”
- **Action:** Later **repented** and **went** to work in the vineyard.

This son represents those who have **rejected God's call** initially—publicans, harlots, sinners, and Gentiles—but later **repented** and obeyed.

### Second Son

- **Initial response:** “I go, sir.”
- **Action: Did not go**—his obedience was empty words.

This son represents the **religious leaders of Israel**—those who appeared righteous outwardly, claimed to obey God, but **rejected Christ** and refused to do the will of the Father.

This parable reveals the **difference between profession and obedience**, between **lip service and true repentance**.

#### 4. The Father's Command: Go Work Today in My Vineyard

The father's command is simple and direct:

“Son, go work today in my vineyard.”

##### Key elements:

- **“Son”** – It's a relational appeal, not merely a master-to-servant order.
- **“Go work”** – It implies active service, not passive agreement.
- **“Today”** – There's **urgency**; the call is for **immediate obedience**.
- **“In my vineyard”** – The vineyard represents God's work in the world, often symbolizing **Israel** (Isaiah 5:1–7).

The parable hinges on **how each son responds** to this personal and urgent command.

#### 5. Repentance versus Rebellion

The first son said **“No”**, but later **repented and went**. This is the gospel story:

- A sinner may reject God initially.
- But through conviction and the work of the Spirit, he can turn, repent, and obey.
- God honors the change of heart over empty promises.

Jesus doesn't glorify initial rebellion, but He magnifies **repentance** over **appearance**.

The second son said **“Yes”**, but **never obeyed**. He represents:

- Religious people who **talk a good game**, but never follow through.

- Those who claim to know God but deny Him in works (Titus 1:16).
- Pharisees who honored God with their lips but whose hearts were far from Him (Matthew 15:8).

This son is the **hypocrite**—a whitewashed tomb full of dead men's bones.

## 6. Jesus' Question: “Which Did the Will of His Father?”

Jesus asks the religious leaders a direct question. Even they cannot deny the answer:

“They say unto him, The first.”

Their answer **condemns themselves**.

They, the ones who pride themselves on doing God’s will, are shown to be the **second son**—all talk, no action. Meanwhile, the “unworthy” ones they despise (publicans and harlots) are **actually obeying God** by repenting and believing the gospel.

## 7. The Verdict: “The Publicans and Harlots Go Into the Kingdom Before You”

This statement would have shocked and enraged the religious elite.

Publicans were tax collectors—seen as traitors to Israel. Harlots were the epitome of impurity. Yet Jesus declares:

- These **undesirables** are entering the Kingdom **before you**.
- Not because of who they were, but because they **repented and believed**.

This echoes John the Baptist’s preaching in Matthew 3:8:

“Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.”

And Christ’s mission in Luke 5:32:

“I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

The implication is that the religious leaders are **not entering at all** unless they also repent.

## 8. Doctrinal Significance: Israel’s Hypocrisy Exposed

Doctrinally, this parable applies to:

- **Israel's national response** to God's call.
- **The Jewish leadership's rejection** of John the Baptist and Jesus.
- The contrast between **Old Covenant profession** and **New Covenant faith**.

The religious elite claimed:

- “We are Abraham’s children.”
- “We follow Moses.”
- “We are keepers of the Law.”

Yet when confronted with the Messiah, they **rejected Him**. They were the **second son**.

Meanwhile, the “unclean” Gentiles and lowly sinners—the **first son**—were entering the Kingdom through **repentance and faith**.

This parable foreshadows the **partial hardening of Israel** (Romans 11:7) and the **inclusion of Gentiles** through the gospel.

## 9. Dispensational Insight

This parable aligns with Jesus’ broader theme in Matthew of the **transfer of stewardship**.

- Israel had long been God’s chosen vessel.
- But due to **their unbelief**, the gospel would soon go to the **Gentiles**.
- The “first shall be last; the last shall be first” principle is at work (Matthew 19:30).

Just as in the Parable of the Tenants (later in Matthew 21), stewardship of the vineyard would be taken from the faithless and given to those who produce fruit.

## 10. KJV Cross-References

- **Isaiah 29:13** – “...this people draw near me with their mouth... but have removed their heart far from me.”
- **Matthew 7:21** – “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom... but he that doeth the will of my Father.”
- **James 1:22** – “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only...”

- **Romans 2:13** – “...the doers of the law shall be justified.”
- **Luke 15:18–20** – The prodigal son repents and returns—action, not just intention.

## 11. Spiritual Application for Today

### A. Talk is Cheap—Obedience is What Matters

God is not impressed by words or religious formality. He wants **hearts that repent** and **lives that obey**.

### B. Don't Judge by Appearances

Some people look religious, but have no relationship with God. Others may have messy pasts, but are genuinely transformed by grace.

### C. It's Not How You Start, But How You Finish

The first son said “No” but later obeyed. This gives hope to those who've failed in the past. **Repentance changes everything.**

### D. God is Merciful to Repentant Sinners

Publicans, harlots, rebels—all are welcome in God's vineyard if they come humbly. His arms are open to those who repent.

## 12. Symbolism and Meaning

Element	Symbolic Meaning
Father	God the Father
Vineyard	God's work; Israel's stewardship; service in the kingdom
First Son	Sinners, Gentiles, publicans, harlots—initial rebels who repent
Second Son	Religious leaders—outward obedience, inward rebellion
“I will not”	Rejection of God's call
“I go, sir”	Empty profession without action

Element	Symbolic Meaning
Repented and went	True conversion and obedience
“Which did the will?”	The heart of the parable—God values action over appearance

### 13. Christ at the Center

Jesus Himself is the embodiment of the perfect Son—unlike either son in the parable. He:

- **Always did the will of His Father** (John 4:34; John 8:29).
- **Humbled Himself** to serve in the vineyard of humanity.
- **Obedied** even unto death (Philippians 2:8).

This parable, while exposing sin, also points to **our need for the true Son**—Jesus Christ—whose obedience secures our salvation and whose righteousness becomes ours by faith.

### Conclusion

The Parable of the Two Sons is short, sharp, and surgical. It slices through the outward forms of religion and pierces to the heart of what God truly desires: **obedience rooted in repentance**.

**Doctrinally**, it confronts the spiritual failure of Israel’s leaders.

**Dispensationally**, it previews the inclusion of the Gentiles and the rejection of unbelieving Israel.

**Spiritually**, it challenges each of us to ask: Am I obeying in word only, or in deed?

Two sons. Two responses. One Father.

Let us not be content with saying, “I go, sir,” while sitting idle.

Let us, like the first son, repent... and go.

### **20 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen**

*Matthew 21:33–46*

**Focus: Israel’s rejection of the prophets and Christ; judgment and the kingdom taken from them**

## Introduction

The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen—also called the Parable of the Wicked Tenants—is one of Jesus' most sobering indictments against Israel's religious leadership. Spoken just days before His crucifixion, this parable serves as a **prophetic summary of Israel's history**, a **warning of judgment**, and a **foreshadowing of the Church Age**. It deals with the stewardship of God's kingdom, Israel's repeated rejection of His messengers, and the climactic murder of His Son.

Jesus frames the parable with imagery that His audience—especially the chief priests and Pharisees—could not misunderstand. Drawing from **Isaiah 5**, which describes Israel as God's vineyard, Jesus adds a stunning conclusion: **the kingdom would be taken from Israel and given to another nation bringing forth the fruits thereof**.

This parable is not merely a historical lesson, but a theological thunderclap. It forces us to grapple with the gravity of **rejecting divine revelation**, and it emphasizes God's sovereign right to **judge**, to **remove**, and to **replace** unfaithful stewards.

### 1. Setting the Stage: The Vineyard and Its Stewardship

“Hear another parable:

There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.”

(Matthew 21:33)

Jesus begins with a scene straight from **Isaiah 5:1–7**, where God describes planting a vineyard—symbolic of **Israel**—with great care and expectation. This connection would not have been lost on His Jewish audience.

#### A. The Householder: God the Father

- He is the **owner**, the one who prepares and protects the vineyard.
- He **plants** it, **hedges** it, **builds** a tower (watchfulness), and **digs a winepress** (fruitfulness).
- He **entrusts** it to husbandmen—those meant to **care for and cultivate** it.

#### B. The Vineyard: The Nation of Israel

- Israel was God’s chosen people, established to bear spiritual fruit and be a light to the nations.
- God’s law, temple, prophets, and presence were given to her.
- She was expected to bear fruit worthy of her blessings (see Romans 9:4–5).

### **C. The Husbandmen: The Religious Leaders of Israel**

- The Pharisees, Sadducees, scribes, and priests—those entrusted with the spiritual care of the nation.
- They were stewards, not owners. Yet they acted as if they had sovereign rights over the vineyard.

## **2. God Sends His Servants: The Rejection of the Prophets**

“And when the time of the fruit drew near,  
 he sent his servants to the husbandmen,  
 that they might receive the fruits of it.  
 And the husbandmen took his servants,  
 and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.”  
 (Matthew 21:34–35)

### **A. The Servants: The Prophets**

- These are the **Old Testament prophets** sent by God to call Israel to repentance.
- Instead of listening, the leaders:
  - **Beat** them (Jeremiah).
  - **Killed** them (Isaiah was sawn in half, tradition says).
  - **Stoned** them (Zechariah, 2 Chron. 24:21).

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets...” (Matthew 23:37)

Israel’s history is marked by a **long line of rejected messengers**. The religious leaders refused correction, choosing pride and control over truth.

### **B. Repeated Mercy, Repeated Rejection**

“Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise.”  
 (v. 36)

This reveals God's **longsuffering**. He doesn't give up after one rejection. He continues to send prophets—more, and with urgency.

Yet each messenger receives the same **violent rejection**. Their mistreatment escalates, showing the hardening of Israel's heart.

### 3. The Son is Sent: The Climactic Rejection of Christ

“But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying,  
They will reverence my son.”  
(Matthew 21:37)

This is the turning point of the parable.

#### A. The Son: Jesus Christ

- This is not another servant—this is **the heir**, the **beloved Son**.
- God, having sent prophets for centuries, now sends **His final and highest messenger—His Son**.
- This matches Hebrews 1:1–2:

“God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...”

#### B. Their Response

“But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves,  
This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.”  
(v. 38)

This is not ignorance—it is **deliberate murder**. They know who He is, and still seek to kill Him.

Just like the Sanhedrin conspired to kill Jesus:

“This is the heir”—they **knew** Jesus claimed divine Sonship. “Let us kill him”—they **plotted His death**. “Seize on his inheritance”—they **wanted control** of the kingdom and authority without submission to God.

#### C. Fulfillment at the Cross

“And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.”  
(v. 39)

Jesus was literally cast **out of Jerusalem** and crucified.  
This parable is **prophecy** as much as it is **parable**.

#### **4. The Judgment: The Vineyard Taken and Given to Others**

“When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh,  
what will he do unto those husbandmen?”  
(Matthew 21:40)

Jesus lets the religious leaders answer their own judgment:

“They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men,  
and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen,  
which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.”  
(v. 41)

They condemn themselves—just like David did when confronted by Nathan in 2 Samuel 12.

##### **A. Miserable Destruction**

- This was fulfilled in **A.D. 70**, when Rome destroyed Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish religious system.
- The priesthood was ended. The sacrifices ceased. Judgment fell.

##### **B. The Kingdom Transferred**

“Therefore say I unto you,  
The kingdom of God shall be taken from you,  
and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”  
(v. 43)

This is monumental. Jesus announces:

- The **end of Israel’s exclusive stewardship**.
- The **transfer of kingdom opportunity** to another nation.

This “nation” is not another ethnic group but a **spiritual people**—those who believe in Christ, Jew or Gentile (see 1 Peter 2:9).

This is not Replacement Theology, which denies Israel’s future. It is a **temporary shift of stewardship**, not the **annihilation of God’s covenant with Israel**.

## 5. The Rejected Stone: Christ Becomes the Cornerstone

“Did ye never read in the scriptures,  
The stone which the builders rejected,  
the same is become the head of the corner...”

(Matthew 21:42, quoting Psalm 118:22–23)

### A. Builders = Jewish Leaders

- They examined the “stone” (Jesus) and deemed Him unworthy.
- But God made that stone the **chief cornerstone**—the foundation of the **Church**.

### B. This is the Lord’s Doing

- Salvation through Christ alone.
- A **new foundation**, not of Law but of grace through faith (Ephesians 2:20).

### C. Warning of Judgment

“Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken:  
but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.”

(v. 44)

- Those who stumble over Christ in unbelief will be **broken**.
- But those upon whom His judgment falls will be **crushed**.

This is both a **call to repentance** and a **warning of wrath**.

## 6. The Leaders Perceive the Parable Is Against Them

“But when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables,  
they perceived that he spake of them.

But when they sought to lay hands on him,  
they feared the multitude...”

(Matthew 21:45–46)

Their response confirms the parable’s accuracy. Instead of repenting, they **plot to arrest Him**—proving themselves the very **murderous tenants** Jesus described.

## 7. Doctrinal Significance

## **A. Israel's History of Rejection**

- Prophets rejected.
- Christ crucified.
- The kingdom's stewardship forfeited (but not God's covenant promises).

## **B. The Church Given Stewardship**

- The Church becomes the new "nation" tasked with bearing fruit.
- This does not cancel Israel, but inserts the **mystery of the Church Age** (Romans 11:25).

## **C. The Return of the Householder**

- Christ will return.
- Judgment will come.
- The vineyard will be given to those who honor the Son.

## **8. Spiritual Application**

### **A. God Has Entrusted Us with His Vineyard**

We are stewards of truth, not owners. The vineyard is His. Our job is to **bear fruit**, not **seize control**.

### **B. God's Patience Has Limits**

He sends messengers. Then He sends His Son. Then comes **judgment**.

Don't presume upon His mercy. Repent now.

### **C. True Fruit Comes From Honoring the Son**

We don't bear fruit by religious effort, but by abiding in Christ—the true Vine (John 15:5).

## **9. KJV Cross-References**

- **Isaiah 5:1–7** – The original vineyard parable; God's judgment on unfruitful Israel.
- **Psalms 118:22** – "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner."

- **Romans 11:20–23** – Natural branches broken off, Gentiles grafted in—but God is able to graft Israel in again.
- **Hebrews 1:1–2** – God spoke in times past by prophets, but now by His Son.
- **1 Peter 2:7–10** – The Church as a holy nation, built upon the cornerstone.

## 10. Symbolic Breakdown

Element	Symbol
Householder	God the Father
Vineyard	Israel (God’s covenant people)
Husbandmen	Religious leaders (Pharisees, priests)
Servants	Prophets sent throughout Israel’s history
Son	Jesus Christ, the final messenger and heir
Killing the son	The crucifixion of Christ
Miserable destruction	Judgment in 70 AD and beyond
New husbandmen	Believers in Christ (Jew and Gentile)
Stone rejected	Christ, rejected by Israel, made cornerstone

## 11. Christ at the Center

This parable puts Christ at the heart of the story:

- **Sent by the Father**
- **Rejected by religious leaders**
- **Crucified outside the vineyard**
- **Exalted as cornerstone**
- **Returning to judge and reward**

It's a clear, concise summary of the **gospel**, the **rejection**, and the **resurrection** of Jesus.

## **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen is a stunning theological drama:

- A vineyard planted in love.
- A series of messengers rejected in pride.
- A Son murdered in rebellion.
- A kingdom removed in judgment.
- A cornerstone established in grace.

**Doctrinally**, it exposes Israel's rejection of Christ.

**Dispensationally**, it explains the shift from Israel to the Church in kingdom stewardship.

**Spiritually**, it warns every heart not to presume upon grace but to **honor the Son**.

When the Lord of the vineyard returns, may He find us **bearing fruit, honoring the Son, and stewarding the kingdom well**.

## **21 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Wedding Feast**

*Matthew 22:1–14*

**Focus: Israel's rejection of the invitation; the Church and Tribulation invitees**

### **Introduction**

The Parable of the Wedding Feast, recorded in Matthew 22:1–14, is among Jesus' most eschatologically charged and dispensationally revealing teachings. In it, Jesus likens the **kingdom of heaven** to a royal wedding prepared by a king for his son, with invitations extended to guests who not only refuse to come, but openly rebel. The parable not only lays bare the tragic **rejection of Israel**, but unveils the unfolding mystery of the **Church Age** and the inclusion of **Gentiles and repentant sinners**, followed by a **Tribunational warning** that not all who come outwardly are inwardly clothed in righteousness.

Spoken during His final week, this parable is part of a trilogy in which Jesus exposes the religious leaders' hypocrisy and resistance. It follows immediately after the Parable of the Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen—both of which culminate in judgment for Israel's

leaders and a transfer of kingdom stewardship. The Wedding Feast parable takes this a step further, painting a vivid picture of the **Father's sovereign call**, the **Son's glorification**, the **nation's rejection**, the **Church's invitation**, and the **final separation** of the true and false guests at the King's final inspection.

## 1. Setting and Context

“And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said,”

*“The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.”*

(Matthew 22:1–2)

The audience here remains the chief priests and Pharisees (see 21:45). Jesus is directly addressing the **religious authorities of Israel**, who claimed to be the guardians of truth, yet were actively rejecting the Truth incarnate.

This parable is not about earthly customs but a **heavenly kingdom**—specifically the **inauguration of the King's Son** in glory. The marriage is a prophetic metaphor for the union between Christ and His people. However, the emphasis here is not the marriage itself (as in Revelation 19), but the **invitation, responses, and results**—revealing how various groups relate to the King's call.

## 2. The King and His Son: God the Father and Jesus Christ

“A certain king, which made a marriage for his son...”

The **King** unmistakably represents **God the Father**, and the **Son** is Jesus Christ. The marriage symbolizes the great redemptive plan where the Son is exalted and united with a bride—His people. In Jewish tradition, a wedding was a cause for multi-day celebration, and a royal wedding even more so. Invitations were sent well in advance, and when the day arrived, messengers would summon the guests again.

This framework mirrors the **prophetic structure of God's dealings**:

- Israel had long received the prophets, the Law, and the promises (the first invitation).
- With the arrival of the Messiah, the **invitation was renewed**, urging immediate response.
- Yet, the response was rejection—just as Jesus had already been experiencing firsthand.

### 3. The First Invitation: Israel's National Rejection

“And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.”

(v. 3)

This first group represents **national Israel**, especially its leadership. The “**servants**” are the **prophets**, and later the apostles, who proclaimed the coming of the kingdom.

Despite centuries of preparation and prophetic expectation, when the invitation finally arrived in Christ, the response was tragic:

**“They would not come.”**

This is not passive disinterest—it’s **willful refusal**.

Jesus is summarizing Israel’s long and painful history of **spurning God's invitation**. John 1:11 echoes this:

“He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”

### 4. The Second Invitation: Gospel Grace and Repeated Mercy

“Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.”

(v. 4)

This represents the **gracious extension** of the gospel:

- After Christ’s death and resurrection (“oxen and fatlings are killed”), the gospel invitation went out again—now with **full atonement made**.
- God had done **everything necessary** for salvation. All that remained was the response.

Here, Jesus is previewing the **post-cross preaching** of the apostles in the book of Acts. They go first to Jerusalem, then to Judea, offering the gospel again to Israel.

### 5. The Response: Indifference and Violence

“But they made light of it, and went their ways,  
one to his farm, another to his merchandise:  
And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.”  
(vv. 5–6)

This two-fold response reflects:

- **Indifference:** “They made light of it.” They had **worldly priorities**—business, personal gain, temporal matters.
- **Hostility:** Others **murdered the messengers**, just as the apostles would later be martyred (Stephen in Acts 7, James in Acts 12, and more).

This is a picture of **spiritual apathy** and **violent rejection**—the two great enemies of the gospel. Whether through disregard or rage, the outcome is the same: the invitation is scorned.

## 6. Judgment Falls on the Rejecters

“But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth:  
and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.”  
(v. 7)

This verse is a **direct prophecy** of the destruction of Jerusalem in **A.D. 70**, when the Roman armies under Titus burned the city and razed the temple.

Notice:

- **“His armies”** – Though Rome carried it out, Jesus attributes the judgment to God.
- **“Burned up their city”** – A literal fulfillment, down to the fire that consumed the temple.

Here, the **judgment on the nation of Israel** is pronounced. They had killed the prophets, rejected the Son, and persecuted His apostles. The result? **National judgment and loss of kingdom stewardship.**

## 7. The Third Invitation: The Church and the Gentiles

“Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready,  
but they which were bidden were not worthy.  
Go ye therefore into the highways,

and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.”

(vv. 8–9)

This marks a **dispensational shift**. The first invitees (Israel) are deemed **unworthy**, and now the invitation is **opened to all**—a picture of the **Church Age**.

“So those servants went out into the highways,  
and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good:  
and the wedding was furnished with guests.”

(v. 10)

This is the **gospel going into all the world**—to Gentiles, outcasts, sinners. The highways represent the **broad world**, outside the original Jewish framework.

Here, Jesus is announcing:

- The **temporary setting aside of Israel** (Romans 11).
- The **calling of the Gentiles** into the kingdom (Ephesians 3:6).
- That salvation is not based on heritage, but on **God’s gracious invitation** to all who believe.

## **8. The Wedding Furnished with Guests: The Church Visible**

This newly gathered group represents the **visible Church**—comprised of all who respond outwardly to the call. Yet not all within this group are truly regenerated.

This sets up the final act: **an inspection** that reveals the presence of an impostor.

## **9. The Man Without the Wedding Garment**

“And when the king came in to see the guests,  
he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment:  
And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?  
And he was speechless.”

(vv. 11–12)

This is one of the most chilling moments in all of Christ’s parables.

### **A. Wedding Garment: Righteousness by Faith**

In ancient weddings, the host often provided garments for the guests. To refuse to wear one was not only insulting—it was rebellious.

Spiritually, the **wedding garment represents the imputed righteousness of Christ**, received by **faith alone**:

“He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation,  
he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.” (Isaiah 61:10)

This man represents those who:

- **Accept the invitation** externally (join the church, profess Christ),
- But **reject the garment**—they attempt to enter the kingdom **on their own merit**.

### **B. “Friend... How Camest Thou In?”**

God sees every heart. No one sneaks into the kingdom unnoticed.

This man is speechless—he has **no defense**, no justification. He had the same opportunity as others but chose **his own way**.

## **10. Judgment of the False Professor**

“Then said the king to the servants,  
Bind him hand and foot, and take him away,  
and cast him into outer darkness;  
there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

(v. 13)

This is **eternal judgment**—a picture of **hell**:

- **“Outer darkness”** – Separation from the light of God.
- **“Weeping and gnashing of teeth”** – Sorrow, anguish, and regret.

This verse demolishes the false doctrine of universalism. Not all who enter the “banquet hall” (visible church) are saved. **Salvation requires the garment of Christ’s righteousness**, not human effort.

## **11. “For Many Are Called, but Few Are Chosen.”**

“For many are called, but few are chosen.”

(v. 14)

This statement summarizes the tension of the entire parable.

- **Many are called** – The invitation goes out widely. The gospel is proclaimed to all nations, tribes, and people.
- **Few are chosen** – Only those who respond in genuine faith, clothed in Christ’s righteousness, are truly saved.

This points to:

- **Human responsibility** – Responding to the call.
- **Divine sovereignty** – The chosen are those who come the **right way**.

## 12. Doctrinal Layers and Dispensational Timeline

Scene	Meaning
King’s preparation	God’s eternal redemptive plan
First invitees	National Israel, especially religious leaders
Refusal and violence	Rejection of prophets and crucifixion of Christ
City burned	Destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.)
Highway guests	Gentiles, sinners, Church Age believers
Man without garment	False converts, hypocrites, self-righteous professors
Final separation	Judgment at the end of the age

## 13. Spiritual Lessons for the Church Today

### A. Gospel Invitations Are Serious

Refusing the gospel is not merely indifference—it is rebellion. Judgment follows.

### B. God Invites the Undeserving

There's hope for every sinner—no matter your past. The King's table has room.

### **C. Mere Profession Is Not Enough**

Church attendance, baptism, moral behavior—none of these save. You must be **clothed in Christ**.

### **D. Judgment Is Real and Eternal**

The parable ends in fire, not feasting—for those who presume without repentance.

### **E. Grace is Free—but not Cheap**

The invitation is free, but entering requires humility, surrender, and **faith in God's provision**.

## **14. KJV Cross-References**

- **Isaiah 5:1–7** – God's vineyard rejected Him.
- **Isaiah 61:10** – Garment of salvation and robe of righteousness.
- **Romans 10:3** – Israel sought to establish their own righteousness.
- **2 Corinthians 5:21** – We are made righteous through Christ.
- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – Salvation is by grace through faith, not works.
- **Revelation 19:7–9** – The marriage supper of the Lamb, with saints clothed in fine linen.

## **15. Christ at the Center**

Christ is:

- **The Son** for whom the feast is prepared.
- **The slain provision**—"fatlings are killed."
- **The righteous garment**—in Him alone are we clothed acceptably.
- **The judge** who inspects the guests and casts out the false.

Rejecting the Son is not a theological misstep—it is **eternal suicide**. Accepting Him is entering a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Wedding Feast is a multi-layered masterpiece of divine truth:

- It warns of **Israel's rebellion, Jerusalem's destruction, and the Church's calling.**
- It affirms the **grace of God, the necessity of righteousness, and the reality of judgment.**
- It exalts the **Son** and challenges every soul:  
**Will you come to the feast God has prepared—or will you refuse the invitation?**

**Do not make light of it.**

**Do not come in your own garments.**

**Come clothed in Christ—and you will dine at the marriage of the Lamb.**

## 22 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Ten Virgins

*Matthew 25:1–13*

**Focus: Readiness for the Bridegroom's return—doctrinally Tribulation saints**

### Introduction

The Parable of the Ten Virgins, recorded in *Matthew 25:1–13*, is one of the most solemn and eschatologically charged parables in all of Scripture. It follows Jesus' *Olivet Discourse* and is part of a trio of parables (along with the Talents and the Sheep and Goats) that unveil deep truths concerning His Second Coming, the Millennial Kingdom, and the judgment that follows.

This particular parable focuses on **readiness**—not for the rapture of the Church (as often misapplied), but for the **return of the Bridegroom at the end of the Tribulation**, specifically as it pertains to **Tribulation saints**, particularly those of Israel. It is a warning about preparation, spiritual vigilance, and the **irreversible consequences of delay**.

Too often, this parable is generalized into a call for all Christians to “stay alert,” but when interpreted within its proper **dispensational context**, it becomes a sharp prophetic warning to those alive at the end of Daniel's 70th week. Let us now carefully unfold the

layers of meaning, types, prophetic insights, and practical applications embedded in this powerful parable.

## 1. The Setting and Prophetic Context

“Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins...”  
(Matthew 25:1)

The word “**Then**” ties this parable directly to the **previous chapter**, Matthew 24, which outlines the **events of the Tribulation**, culminating in the visible, physical **Second Coming of Jesus Christ** in glory. The parable is not about the Church being “caught up” in the rapture (which occurs before the Tribulation), but about those who are **alive and awaiting the coming King at the close of that seven-year period**.

This is **post-rapture, pre-Millennial Kingdom** terrain. The “kingdom of heaven” refers here to the **literal, Davidic Kingdom** Christ will establish upon His return (Luke 1:32–33). This parable is best understood **doctrinally** as applying to:

- **Tribulation saints**—especially Jewish believers
- **Remnant Israel**, awaiting the Messiah
- **Those tested under severe trial**, as seen in Revelation 6–19

## 2. The Parable Begins: Ten Virgins, One Event

“Ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.”  
(Matthew 25:1)

### A. The Number Ten

In Scripture, *ten* often symbolizes **completion** of order or testing (e.g., Ten Commandments, ten days of tribulation in Revelation 2:10). The ten virgins represent a **complete group**—possibly the remnant of those waiting for the Bridegroom during the Tribulation.

### B. Virgins as Types

These virgins are **not the Bride**, which is the **Church** (already raptured before the Tribulation). Rather, they are **companions, attendants, or guests**, akin to **those awaiting the Bridegroom’s procession**—a common wedding practice in first-century Jewish culture.

They represent:

- **Tribulation saints** awaiting the return of Christ
- Those who align with Israel's national restoration
- A **mixed multitude**—some prepared, some unprepared

### C. Lamps in Hand

Lamps are symbolic of:

- **Personal light** (Psalm 119:105 – “Thy word is a lamp...”)
- **Spiritual readiness**
- That which must be **fed with oil**—suggesting dependence on **the Spirit of God**

This detail underscores the **individual responsibility** of each person to be ready for the Bridegroom's coming.

### 3. Two Groups: Wise and Foolish

“And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.”

“They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:  
But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.”

(Matthew 25:2–4)

#### A. Equal Appearance, Different Preparation

All ten are virgins. All carry lamps. All are waiting. Outwardly, they are indistinguishable. But inwardly, there is a critical difference.

- The **foolish** had lamps (appearance) but **no oil** (substance).
- The **wise** had both **lamps and oil**—they were truly prepared.

This reflects the difference between:

- **Empty profession** vs. **genuine possession**
- **Outward ritual** vs. **inward reality**
- **Religious identity** vs. **spiritual regeneration**

#### B. The Oil: Symbol of the Holy Spirit

Throughout Scripture, **oil** is a symbol of the **Holy Spirit** (Zechariah 4:1–6). It is not merely emotion or enthusiasm but **God’s enabling presence**. The wise virgins picture those who are truly **indwelt** or **empowered** by God’s Spirit, while the foolish lack that vital supply.

In the **Tribulation context**, the oil represents:

- Genuine **faith under fire**
- **Readiness through perseverance**
- **Spiritual vigilance** amid deception and persecution

#### **4. The Bridegroom Delays: A Test of Endurance**

“While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.”  
(Matthew 25:5)

The delay is **deliberate** and **prophetic**:

- It mirrors the **long wait** many believers endure
- It reflects the **testing of patience and faith** during the Tribulation
- It separates those who have **internal oil** from those who merely burn on external momentum

Even the wise slumber—but the difference is, they slumber **prepared**.

This delay echoes:

- *2 Peter 3:9* – “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise...”
- *Revelation 6:10* – “How long, O Lord, holy and true...”

The slumber suggests weariness, but not abandonment of faith. It is the **waiting in the dark** that tests what was stored up during the day.

#### **5. Midnight Cry: The Sudden Arrival**

“And at midnight there was a cry made,  
Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.”  
(Matthew 25:6)

Midnight in Scripture often symbolizes:

- **Judgment** (Exodus 12:29)
- **Divine intervention** (Acts 16:25–26)
- **Unexpected turning points** (Psalm 119:62)

This cry is analogous to **Revelation 19:11–16**, when Christ returns visibly and in power. The cry **awakens** the waiting virgins—it is the moment of **decision and division**.

## 6. The Crisis of the Foolish Virgins

“Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.  
And the foolish said unto the wise,  
Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.”  
(Matthew 25:7–8)

### A. Too Late to Borrow

The unprepared try to **borrow** spiritual readiness—but it cannot be transferred. Salvation is **personal**, not communal. Faith cannot be loaned, purchased, or shared at the last minute.

### B. Their Lamps Go Out

The Greek literally implies “are going out.” The **last flickers of borrowed light** are failing. They had enough to look the part, but not enough to endure.

Their desperate cry is too late. This is a picture of many who **will seek the Lord in a time of judgment**, but find the door closed (see Proverbs 1:24–28).

## 7. The Wise Enter the Marriage

“But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you:  
but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.”  
“And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came;  
and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage:  
and the door was shut.”  
(Matthew 25:9–10)

### A. The Door of Grace Closes

The wise enter—because they were ready. The foolish seek too late. Once the Bridegroom arrives, **the door shuts**—an image that echoes:

- **Genesis 7:16** – “And the Lord shut him in.”
- **Luke 13:25** – “When once the master... hath shut to the door...”

There is a time limit on grace. When Christ returns at the end of the Tribulation, **the door to kingdom entrance is shut**. No more opportunities. No second chances.

## **B. Entrance into the Millennial Kingdom**

Those who are ready **enter into the wedding feast**, symbolizing:

- Entrance into the **Millennial Kingdom**
- Fulfillment of **Israel’s long-awaited Messianic hope**
- **Reward for perseverance** through Tribulation faith

## **8. The Latecomers and the Final Judgment**

“Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.”

(Matthew 25:11–12)

This is one of the most **devastating** responses in all of Jesus’ teachings. The repetition—“Lord, Lord”—echoes Matthew 7:21–23:

“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord... and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you...”

These are not atheists or pagans. They expected entry. They had the form—but not the **substance** of salvation.

“I know you not” means:

- No relational covenant
- No intimate fellowship
- No divine recognition

It’s not that God doesn’t *know who they are*—it’s that they **don’t belong to Him**.

## **9. The Final Exhortation**

“Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.”

(Matthew 25:13)

### A. Watchfulness Defined

Watching is more than looking at the sky. It is:

- **Readiness of heart**
- **Oil in your vessel**
- **Faith that endures to the end** (Matthew 24:13)

### B. Not for the Church

This parable is not about the **pre-Tribulation rapture of the Church** (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17), where all the saved are caught up. It’s about **those left behind**, those living during the Tribulation, awaiting the Second Coming.

Doctrinally, it applies to:

- **Tribulation survivors**
- **Jewish remnant**
- **Those awaiting entry into the Millennial Kingdom**

## 10. Doctrinal Layers and Dispensational Significance

Symbol	Meaning
Ten Virgins	Tribulation survivors awaiting Christ’s return
Wise Virgins	Believers with enduring faith (Remnant Israel, Gentiles)
Foolish Virgins	False professors, religious but unsaved
Lamps	Profession of faith
Oil	Indwelling of the Holy Spirit / true readiness
Midnight Cry	Second Coming of Christ (Revelation 19)

Symbol	Meaning
Shut Door	End of Tribulation; entrance to Millennial Kingdom closed
Marriage	The inauguration of the Kingdom; Christ enthroned

## 11. Spiritual Application for Today

Even though this parable is not about the Church Age per se, it holds valuable lessons for **every generation**.

### A. Don't Assume—Be Sure

It's possible to look the part and still not be ready. Salvation is not about proximity to spiritual things, but **possession of Christ**.

### B. Readiness Cannot Be Borrowed

Each soul must respond personally to God. You cannot rely on your family, your church, or your works.

### C. Delayed Preparation Is Eternal Regret

The foolish virgins were not hostile—just unprepared. That was enough to **exclude them forever**.

### D. The Door Will Shut

Grace is offered today—but it will not be offered indefinitely. The **window of repentance** is closing.

## 12. KJV Cross-References

- **Isaiah 55:6** – “Seek ye the LORD while he may be found...”
- **Genesis 7:16** – “The LORD shut him in.”
- **Luke 13:25** – “When once the master... hath shut to the door...”
- **Matthew 7:21–23** – “I never knew you: depart from me...”
- **2 Corinthians 6:2** – “Now is the day of salvation...”
- **Proverbs 1:24–28** – “They shall call upon me, but I will not answer...”

### 13. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **Bridegroom**—long-awaited, suddenly appearing, triumphant
- The **Judge**—who discerns the heart, not just the outward lamp
- The **Door**—once closed, no man can open (Revelation 3:7)
- The **Hope** of the watchful, and the **terror** of the unprepared

He is the dividing line between entrance and exclusion, joy and judgment.

#### Conclusion

The Parable of the Ten Virgins is not merely a bedtime story about watchfulness—it is a **prophetic warning** wrapped in a ceremonial image. It speaks to a **future generation**, facing the climax of human history, caught between wrath and redemption, trial and triumph.

**Doctrinally**, it highlights the fate of **Tribulation saints**—some enter, some are cast out.

**Dispensationally**, it belongs to the **Olivet Discourse**, pointing to the **Second Coming**, not the Rapture.

**Spiritually**, it reminds us: true readiness is more than having a lamp—it's having oil.

The Bridegroom is coming.

The cry will ring out at midnight.

Will your lamp be burning?

### **23 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Talents**

*Matthew 25:14–30*

**Focus: Faithfulness in the Master's absence; judgment at His return**

#### Introduction

The Parable of the Talents is a rich, multi-layered teaching of Jesus that underscores the necessity of **faithful stewardship**, **individual accountability**, and the **reality of judgment**

at His return. Delivered as part of the **Olivet Discourse** in *Matthew 24–25*, this parable flows naturally from the preceding one about the Ten Virgins. While the virgins emphasize **readiness**, the talents emphasize **responsibility**. One speaks of spiritual preparedness, the other of spiritual productivity.

Doctrinally, the Parable of the Talents is not directed at the Church per se, but speaks prophetically to **Tribulation saints**, particularly **Jewish believers** awaiting Christ's return to establish His Kingdom. Yet its spiritual principles apply powerfully to all who serve Christ today, reminding us that our **lives, gifts, and opportunities** are not our own but given by God for His glory. The King is coming—and when He does, **He will settle accounts**.

This essay explores the cultural context, theological depth, prophetic meaning, and practical applications of one of the most sobering and empowering parables in Scripture.

## 1. The Setting: A Man Traveling into a Far Country

*“For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.”*

(Matthew 25:14)

### A. The Man: Jesus Christ

The “man traveling” represents **Jesus**, who, after His resurrection, ascended into heaven (the “far country”), entrusting His people with stewardship over what belongs to Him.

### B. The Servants: Tribulation Believers (Doctrinal), All Believers (Spiritual)

These servants represent those who belong to the Master—entrusted with His work while He is away.

- **Doctrinally**, they are Tribulation saints—specifically faithful Jews who await their King (see Revelation 14:4, Daniel 12:12).
- **Spiritually**, they apply to all believers entrusted with the gospel, spiritual gifts, and life itself.

### C. Delivered His Goods

This indicates **stewardship**, not ownership. All that we possess—time, talent, truth, resources—belong to Him and are temporarily **loaned to us for His purposes**.

## 2. The Distribution: Five, Two, and One Talent

*“And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.”*

(Matthew 25:15)

### **A. Talents: Large Sums of Money**

A talent was a **monetary unit**, often representing **20 years’ wages** for a laborer. But in parabolic language, it extends beyond finances to represent:

- **Spiritual opportunity**
- **Entrusted truth**
- **God-given abilities and responsibilities**

### **B. Different Portions, Same Expectation**

Notice:

- The amounts differ (five, two, one).
- The **Master gives “according to ability”**—He knows what each can handle.
- **No one is left out.** Everyone receives something.

This reflects a profound spiritual truth:

**God does not expect the same results from everyone—but He does expect the same faithfulness.**

## **3. The First Two Servants: Faithful Investment**

*“Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.”*

*“And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.”*

(Matthew 25:16–17)

### **A. Immediate Action**

They **“went and traded”**—they didn’t wait or hesitate. Their response was active, intentional, and immediate.

### **B. Return on Investment**

Both servants doubled what they had been given. Their success was not measured against each other, but against their **faithfulness to what they had received.**

## C. Spiritual Parallel

These servants picture:

- Those who **faithfully serve Christ** in hostile conditions (especially during the Tribulation).
- Believers who **invest their lives** in Kingdom work, not for personal gain, but for the glory of the Master.

Faithfulness here involves:

- Sharing truth
- Enduring persecution
- Ministering to others
- Stewarding time and resources for Christ

## 4. The Third Servant: Fearful Neglect

*“But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord’s money.”*  
(Matthew 25:18)

This servant doesn’t waste the money, but he **refuses to use it**.

### A. Dug and Hid

- A deliberate act of **burying potential**.
- Reflects spiritual **apathy, cowardice, or unbelief**.

### B. False Safety

In first-century Palestine, burying valuables was common for protection. But in spiritual terms, it **symbolizes disobedience**, not prudence.

**Doing nothing with what God gave you is not neutrality—it’s rebellion.**

## 5. The Reckoning: “After a Long Time...”

*“After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.”*  
(Matthew 25:19)

## A. Delay, Then Return

The Lord may delay, but **He will return**. This pictures the **Second Coming**, particularly at the **end of the Tribulation**, when Christ returns to judge the nations and establish His Kingdom (Matthew 24:29–31, Revelation 19:11–16).

## B. Reckoning

This is **judgment**, not to determine salvation (these are servants), but to **evaluate service and reward**.

This matches 2 Corinthians 5:10:

“We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ...”

It is a time of:

- **Accountability** – “What did you do with what I gave you?”
- **Transparency** – Nothing will be hidden.
- **Just reward** – Based on faithfulness, not amount.

## 6. The Commendation: “Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant”

*“Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.”*

(Matthew 25:21, 23)

### A. Two Rewards

1. **Promotion** – “Ruler over many things”
  - Points to **millennial reign** of Christ (Revelation 20:4).
  - Faithfulness in small things leads to **greater authority** in the Kingdom.
2. **Joy of the Lord** – Eternal fellowship, joy, and satisfaction.

### B. Identical Praise for Both Servants

Whether five or two talents, both receive the **same reward**—because both were equally **faithful**.

**God doesn’t reward volume; He rewards obedience.**

## 7. The Excuse: The Wicked Servant Speaks

*“Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man... and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth...”*

(Matthew 25:24–25)

### A. Mischaracterizing the Master

This servant accuses the Master of being:

- **Harsh**
- **Demanding**
- **Unfair**

This reflects the attitude of:

- Those who **resent God’s authority**
- Those who **serve from fear, not faith**
- Those who **blame God to excuse themselves**

### B. Paralyzed by Fear

“I was afraid...”

Fear became an excuse for **faithlessness**. But Scripture consistently teaches:

- “God hath not given us a spirit of fear...” (2 Timothy 1:7)
- “The fearful... shall have their part in the lake which burneth...” (Revelation 21:8)

Fear that leads to disobedience is **condemned**, not excused.

## 8. The Judgment: “Thou Wicked and Slothful Servant”

*“Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.”*

(Matthew 25:28)

### A. No Reward, Only Loss

- His talent is removed.
- He is labeled “wicked” and “slothful”—not just lazy, but morally deficient.
- He is **cast into outer darkness**.

## B. Final Separation

*“Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

(Matthew 25:30)

This is a picture of:

- **Hell**—a place of conscious sorrow and eternal separation.
- The fate of **false professors**—those who **identify as servants** but never knew the Master.

This matches Matthew 7:22–23:

“I never knew you: depart from me...”

## 9. Doctrinal and Dispensational Significance

### A. Timeline

- The parable occurs **after the Rapture**, during the **Tribulation**.
- The **reckoning** aligns with Christ’s **Second Coming** and the **Judgment of the Nations** (Matthew 25:31–46).

### B. Groups Represented

Servant	Represents
Five-Talent Servant	Faithful Tribulation saints (especially Jewish)
Two-Talent Servant	Faithful Gentile believers during Tribulation
One-Talent Servant	False believers; Tribulation hypocrites

### C. Application to Millennial Reign

Those who are faithful will be **given responsibility in the Kingdom**, ruling with Christ (Revelation 20:6, Luke 19:17).

## 10. Spiritual Lessons for the Church Today

Though doctrinally for Tribulation saints, the parable echoes timeless principles:

### **A. You Are a Steward, Not an Owner**

Everything you have—time, gifts, influence—belongs to God.

### **B. Faithfulness Is the Measure of Success**

God is not measuring your success against others but against **what you did with what He gave you.**

### **C. Fear Is No Excuse for Inaction**

God desires bold, obedient service. Cowardice rooted in unbelief will be judged.

### **D. Accountability Is Coming**

The King is coming back. Your life will be examined. What will He find?

## **11. KJV Cross-References**

- **Luke 19:11–27** – Parallel account of servants and minas
- **2 Corinthians 5:10** – “We must all appear before the judgment seat...”
- **Revelation 20:6** – “They shall reign with him a thousand years...”
- **Romans 14:12** – “Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”
- **Proverbs 10:4** – “The hand of the diligent maketh rich.”

## **12. Christ at the Center**

Jesus is:

- **The Master** who gives gifts
- **The Returning King** who settles accounts
- **The Just Judge** who rewards or condemns
- **The Source** of every talent
- **The Standard** by which all are measured

He is not a “hard man” but a **just and generous King**, offering eternal joy to those who serve Him faithfully.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Talents is a call to **serious reflection and bold action**. It reminds us that the Christian life is not about coasting, but about **stewarding** every moment for the glory of God.

**Doctrinally**, it forecasts the judgment of those alive at Christ's return.

**Dispensationally**, it belongs to the **end of the Tribulation**, marking the entrance to the Millennial Kingdom.

**Spiritually**, it demands we ask: *Am I investing what God has given me? Or am I hiding it in the earth?*

The Master is coming.

Will He say to you,

“Well done, good and faithful servant”?

Or,

“Thou wicked and slothful servant... cast him into outer darkness”?

The time for service is now.

Because the moment of reckoning is near.

## **24 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats**

*Matthew 25:31–46*

**Focus: Judgment of the nations at Christ's Second Coming**

### Introduction

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats, found in *Matthew 25:31–46*, is not merely a parable—it is a **prophetic declaration** of a literal event to come: the **Judgment of the Nations** at the **Second Coming of Jesus Christ**. This passage marks the **climax of the Olivet Discourse**, a series of teachings Jesus gave on the Mount of Olives concerning His return, the end of the age, and the final establishment of His kingdom on earth.

Unlike many of Jesus' parables that involve symbolic or hypothetical characters, this scene is not allegorical fiction—it is a **prophetic picture of real people and events** that will unfold at the conclusion of the Tribulation period. The return of the Son of Man will not be

quiet or hidden, as was His first coming. Rather, He will return in glory, seated on His throne, and all the nations of the earth will be gathered before Him.

This event is commonly misunderstood or misapplied to mean the general judgment of all souls or the final judgment at the Great White Throne. However, when taken in context and studied carefully, it becomes clear that Jesus is describing a **distinct, earthly judgment** to determine **who will enter the Millennial Kingdom** after the Tribulation. The criteria for this judgment? How the nations treated **“the least of these my brethren”**—a reference to **faithful Jewish believers** during the Tribulation.

This essay will explore the prophetic, dispensational, doctrinal, and spiritual dimensions of this weighty passage and its implications for the end-time timeline.

## **1. The Setting: The King in His Glory**

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:”

(Matthew 25:31)

### **A. The Timing: After the Tribulation**

This judgment occurs **after the Tribulation** (Matthew 24:29–30) and **before the Millennial Kingdom** (Revelation 20). The return of Christ is visible, glorious, and accompanied by angelic hosts (Revelation 19:11–16). It is not a rapture or secret gathering, but a **public and global return**.

### **B. The Judge: The Son of Man**

Jesus refers to Himself using the Messianic title from Daniel 7:13–14:

“...behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven... and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom...”

Christ is not only Savior and Shepherd—He is **Judge and King**, seated on His throne with **absolute authority**.

### **C. The Throne of His Glory**

This is **not** the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11), which occurs after the Millennium and is for the unsaved dead. This is the **throne of David** (Luke 1:32–33), established on earth in Jerusalem, from which Christ will **rule the nations with a rod of iron**.

## 2. The Audience: All Nations Gathered

“And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another,

as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats:”

(Matthew 25:32)

### A. “All Nations”

The Greek word for “nations” is *ethnos*, which can refer to **Gentile people groups**. This judgment is not of individuals from every generation, but of **living Gentiles** who survive the Tribulation and are brought before Christ to be judged.

These are **not resurrected dead**, but **those who endured the Tribulation alive** (see Matthew 24:13).

### B. The Separation

Jesus, the Great Shepherd (John 10), will **divide the nations** as a shepherd separates **sheep from goats**—a common pastoral image in the ancient world. Though they may graze together, sheep and goats differ in nature and behavior. The separation is based not on appearance, but on **inward identity and outward action**.

## 3. The Sheep: Welcomed into the Kingdom

“Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand,

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:”

(Matthew 25:34)

### A. The Right Hand: Position of Favor

In biblical imagery, the right hand symbolizes **blessing, authority, and acceptance** (Psalm 16:11).

### B. “Blessed of My Father”

These are the nations that **showed favor to God’s people**—not merely by kindness, but by **faith in action** during the most hostile time in history: the Tribulation.

### C. The Kingdom Prepared

This is not heaven. It is the **earthly, literal Kingdom** promised to Israel and ruled by Christ for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:4–6).

These Gentiles are **granted entrance into the Millennial Kingdom**—not because of their merit, but because their works **proved the reality of their faith**.

#### 4. The Test: Treatment of “These My Brethren”

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat:

I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink:

I was a stranger, and ye took me in...”

(Matthew 25:35–36)

##### A. The Works Listed

These acts of mercy—feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and imprisoned, clothing the naked—are **literal, tangible expressions** of compassion and aid.

They are not abstract good deeds but are **specific to the context of persecution and suffering** during the Tribulation.

##### B. “The Least of These My Brethren”

This is the **key interpretive phrase**. Who are “my brethren”?

- Doctrinally, “my brethren” refers to **Jewish believers**—particularly the 144,000 sealed Jews (Revelation 7:4–8) and other faithful remnant Israelites.
- In Matthew 10:40–42, Jesus said that receiving His messengers is equivalent to receiving Him.
- These Jewish believers will be **persecuted intensely during the Tribulation**, hunted by the Antichrist (Revelation 12:17), and reliant on the **mercy of others** for survival.

The Gentiles who **protect, feed, and shelter these Jews** during this time are **proving their faith** and siding with Christ, even at great personal risk.

#### 5. The Sheep’s Surprise

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying,

Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? ...”

(Matthew 25:37–39)

The sheep are not boasting of their works. Their humility shows:

- Their **motives were pure**—not to earn reward, but out of love and conscience.

- They didn't recognize the full **spiritual weight** of their actions.

Jesus responds:

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”

(Matthew 25:40)

This echoes Proverbs 19:17:

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord...”

In God's eyes, how we treat His people is how we treat **Him**.

## **6. The Goats: Cast into Everlasting Fire**

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:”

(Matthew 25:41)

### **A. The Left Hand: Position of Rejection**

Just as the right hand symbolizes favor, the left symbolizes **rejection** and **judgment**.

### **B. “Depart from Me”**

These are the most tragic words anyone can hear from Christ (cf. Matthew 7:23).

Separation from God is **eternal death**.

### **C. “Ye Cursed”**

Where the sheep were “blessed,” the goats are “cursed.” Their refusal to show mercy to God's people proves that they had **no saving faith**.

### **D. Everlasting Fire**

This is **hell**, the lake of fire—designed not originally for mankind, but for **“the devil and his angels.”**

Those who reject Christ align with Satan, and thus share in his punishment (Revelation 20:15).

## **7. The Goats' Protest**

“Then shall they also answer him, saying,  
Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst...?”  
(Matthew 25:44)

Like the sheep, the goats are unaware—but **not in humility**, but in **defense**.

- They did not recognize Christ in His people.
- They failed to act, **revealing the absence of true faith**.

Jesus answers:

“Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these,  
ye did it not to me.”  
(Matthew 25:45)

## 8. The Final Separation

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment:  
but the righteous into life eternal.”  
(Matthew 25:46)

### A. Two Destinies

There is no third group. Everyone ends in:

- **Everlasting punishment**, or
- **Life eternal**

The sheep enter the **Millennial Kingdom**, and ultimately the **New Heaven and New Earth**.  
The goats are cast into **eternal hell**, where their punishment is **conscious, eternal, and just**.

### B. No Appeals, No Reversals

Once the King speaks, the decision is final.

## 9. Doctrinal and Dispensational Breakdown

Element	Meaning
Son of Man in Glory	Christ's Second Coming at end of Tribulation

<b>Element</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Throne of Glory	Earthly throne in Jerusalem; not Great White Throne
All Nations	Gentiles alive at the end of the Tribulation
Sheep	Believing Gentiles who aided Jews during the Tribulation
Goats	Unbelieving Gentiles who ignored or persecuted Jewish believers
My Brethren	Jewish believers, especially the 144,000 and the remnant
Kingdom Inherited	Entrance into the Millennial Kingdom
Everlasting Fire	Hell, reserved for Satan and unbelievers
Separation	Visible, final judgment before Kingdom begins

## 10. Connection to End-Time Timeline

1. **Rapture of the Church** (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)
2. **Tribulation Period** (Daniel’s 70th Week – Daniel 9:27)
3. **Second Coming of Christ** (Revelation 19)
4. **Sheep and Goats Judgment** (Matthew 25:31–46)
5. **Millennial Kingdom Begins** (Revelation 20:4–6)

This judgment is a **prelude to the Kingdom**, not the final judgment of all souls. It determines who will **enter alive** into the reign of Christ.

## 11. Spiritual Lessons for Today

### A. Compassion Matters to God

How we treat others, especially God’s people, is a reflection of our relationship with Him.

### B. The Time to Choose is Now

At Christ’s return, the time for decision is over. The separation will be swift and permanent.

### C. Faith That Works

True saving faith produces **compassionate action**. Mere profession, without fruit, is meaningless.

#### **D. Jesus Identifies With His People**

Persecuting believers is persecuting Christ (Acts 9:4). Helping believers is helping Christ (Matthew 10:40–42).

#### **12. KJV Cross-References**

- **Daniel 7:13–14** – Son of Man receives kingdom
- **Revelation 20:4–6** – Saints reign with Christ 1,000 years
- **2 Thessalonians 1:7–9** – Flaming fire, taking vengeance
- **Matthew 10:40–42** – Receiving His messengers is receiving Him
- **Revelation 19:11–16** – Christ returns in glory
- **Revelation 20:15** – Whosoever not found in the book of life cast into the lake of fire

#### **13. Christ at the Center**

Jesus is:

- **The Son of Man in Glory**
- **The Shepherd-King**
- **The Just Judge**
- **The Defender of His People**
- **The Divider of Sheep and Goats**

He is not neutral. His return is not optional. His kingdom is not abstract.

You will either be at His right hand—or His left.

#### **Conclusion**

The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats is not a call to vague acts of kindness or works-based salvation—it is a **prophetic announcement** of a coming **worldwide judgment**

based on **real faith** demonstrated through compassion during the darkest days in human history.

**Doctrinally**, it reveals the **judgment of the Gentile nations** at the Second Coming.

**Dispensationally**, it marks the **transition from Tribulation to the Millennial Kingdom**.

**Spiritually**, it demands we consider:

“Do I love God enough to love His people—even when it costs me everything?”

The King is coming.

And He is bringing judgment with Him.

When He sits on His throne of glory,

will you be at His right hand...

or His left?

## **25 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Growing Seed**

*Mark 4:26–29*

**Focus: Secret growth of God’s work; hints at Kingdom mystery phase**

### **Introduction**

Among the parables of Jesus, the *Parable of the Growing Seed* found in *Mark 4:26–29* is a quiet gem—brief, mysterious, and profound. Unlike the better-known parables in the Synoptic Gospels, this one appears **only in Mark’s Gospel**. It occupies a unique space in Jesus’ teaching ministry, revealing a **mystery phase of the Kingdom** that unfolds during His physical absence.

This parable speaks of **divinely initiated growth**, **quiet progress**, and **inevitable harvest**—a spiritual truth that spans both **individual hearts** and the **prophetic timetable** of God’s kingdom plan. It shows that God’s kingdom does not always come with fanfare or visibility, but it advances in ways that are **imperceptible yet unstoppable**.

While often overshadowed by the Parable of the Sower or the Parable of the Mustard Seed, this parable offers crucial insight into the **Church Age**, the **mystery form of the Kingdom**, and the **supernatural nature of gospel progress**. Let’s explore its theological depths, practical implications, and dispensational significance.

## 1. The Text of the Parable

*“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.*

*For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.*

*But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”*

(Mark 4:26–29)

## 2. The Kingdom of God: Not Yet Visible, But Powerfully Active

Jesus begins, *“So is the kingdom of God...”* This points to a **simile**—a comparison designed to unlock a mystery.

### A. Not the Millennial Kingdom (Yet)

- In the Old Testament, the Kingdom was often understood as the **literal reign of the Messiah** from David’s throne (Isaiah 9:7).
- However, this parable reveals a **new and mysterious phase**: the Kingdom is present, but not yet visible; growing, but not yet harvested.

### B. The Mystery Phase

- Jesus refers to this **hidden stage** as the “mystery of the kingdom of God” in Mark 4:11.
- The parable fits into the **Church Age**, a time when God is gathering citizens for the kingdom **before visibly establishing it on earth**.

## 3. The Sower: God’s Servant, Not the Hero of the Story

*“As if a man should cast seed into the ground...”*

(Mark 4:26)

This sower symbolizes:

- **Any servant of God** who spreads the Word (see the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:14).

- But unlike the previous parable, the focus here is **not on the soil**, but on **what happens after the seed is planted**.

### A. He Simply Sows

The man **casts seed**. That's it. No gimmicks, no digging around, no dramatic strategies—just faithful **distribution of the Word**.

**The power is not in the skill of the sower but in the life of the seed.**

## 4. The Mysterious Process of Growth

*“And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.”*

(Mark 4:27)

Here we see the wonder of **invisible, autonomous growth**.

### A. The Sower's Inactivity

The man sleeps and wakes—life goes on. He's not manipulating or controlling the seed. This tells us:

- God's work is **not dependent on constant human intervention**.
- The seed grows **invisibly**, even when no one watches.

### B. “He Knoweth Not How”

This phrase reflects **the mystery of spiritual regeneration**. Salvation and spiritual maturity are not human achievements. They are divine miracles.

John 3:8 echoes this mystery:

“The wind bloweth where it listeth... so is every one that is born of the Spirit.”

## 5. The Earth Brings Forth Fruit of Herself

*“For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.”*

(Mark 4:28)

### A. The Greek Word: “Automatos” (Automatically)

This is where we get our English word “automatic.” The idea is **natural, effortless, inevitable development**—not human-induced.

## B. God’s Internal Process

This growth is:

- **Sequential:** first blade, then ear, then full corn.
- **Orderly:** not chaotic, but divinely structured.
- **Progressive:** God works in stages—often slowly, always intentionally.

This pattern applies to:

- **Individual growth** – from baby Christian to mature believer.
- **Church expansion** – from local beginnings to global witness.
- **Kingdom development** – from invisible roots to visible reign.

## 6. The Stages of Growth: A Spiritual Blueprint

Stage	Symbol	Application
Blade	Initial signs of life	Salvation; newborn faith
Ear	Structure without fullness	Maturing understanding
Full Corn	Complete fruit	Christlikeness; readiness for harvest

This reminds us:

- Don’t despise small beginnings.
- Don’t rush the process.
- Fruit takes time—but it **will come**.

## 7. The Harvest Comes “Immediately”

*“But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”*

(Mark 4:29)

## A. The End of the Age

This is a picture of **final judgment and reward**. When the fruit is ripe, the time of waiting ends, and the harvest begins.

This aligns with:

- **Joel 3:13** – “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe...”
- **Revelation 14:15** – “Thrust in thy sickle, and reap...”

## B. The Harvest Is Sure

Though growth is slow and mysterious, **the end is sudden and irreversible**. This points to:

- The **Second Coming of Christ**.
- The **separation of true and false believers**.
- The **consummation of the Kingdom**.

## 8. Doctrinal Application: The Mystery Kingdom

This parable reflects the **current invisible kingdom**—the reign of Christ in hearts and among believers before His literal return.

It aligns with the “**mysteries of the kingdom**” in Matthew 13, where Jesus shifts expectations from an immediate visible kingdom to a **gradual, hidden phase**.

## A. Church Age Preview

The Church is not the Kingdom itself, but part of the **Kingdom program**. This parable pictures:

- The **spiritual work** of Christ from heaven
- The **ongoing sowing** of the gospel
- The **unseen growth** in hearts
- The **future harvest** at the end of the age

## 9. Spiritual Application for Believers

### A. Sow Faithfully, Even if You Don't See Results

- Your job is not to force growth, but to **spread the seed**.
- God brings increase (1 Corinthians 3:6).

### **B. Trust the Process**

- Spiritual maturity doesn't happen overnight.
- The Spirit works in silence, even when you don't feel it.

### **C. Rest in God's Sovereignty**

- Don't be discouraged by slowness.
- God is never in a hurry—but He is never late.

### **D. Prepare for Harvest**

- The harvest is real.
- Be ready—whether that's reward for service or judgment for rejection.

## **10. Prophetic Insight: Anticipation of the Millennial Kingdom**

Though the Kingdom is growing secretly now, it will soon be revealed **visibly and gloriously** at Christ's return.

This parable previews:

- **Current mystery:** the Kingdom is here, but hidden.
- **Coming manifestation:** the Kingdom will soon be revealed in power.

It aligns with:

- *Daniel 2:35* – The stone that grows into a mountain.
- *Isaiah 11* – The reign of Messiah from Jerusalem.

## **11. KJV Cross-References**

- **1 Corinthians 3:6–7** – “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.”
- **John 3:8** – “The wind bloweth where it listeth...”
- **Galatians 6:9** – “In due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

- **Isaiah 55:10-11** – God’s Word shall not return void.
- **Revelation 14:15** – “The harvest of the earth is ripe.”

## 12. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- **The Sower of the seed**
- **The Lord of the harvest**
- **The Word made flesh**
- **The King whose Kingdom cannot be stopped**

He is both the **Author and Finisher** of the work (Hebrews 12:2). Though absent in body, He is **active in power**, working behind the scenes.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Growing Seed teaches us that **God’s work does not depend on our striving**. His Kingdom is not built on hype, but on **truth**—quietly, steadily working like a seed underground.

**Doctrinally**, it introduces the **mystery phase** of the Kingdom—the Church Age.

**Dispensationally**, it separates the **visible Davidic reign** from the **invisible spiritual sowing** of today.

**Spiritually**, it calls us to:

- **Trust**
- **Sow**
- **Wait**
- **Expect**

God is doing more than we can see.

You plant. You water. You sleep. You rise.

And one day...

“Immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.”

## **26 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Two Debtors**

*Luke 7:41–43*

**Focus: Gratitude from those forgiven much; rebuke of self-righteousness**

### **Introduction**

Among the many parables Jesus taught, few are as succinct and piercing as the *Parable of the Two Debtors* found in *Luke 7:41–43*. Tucked within a powerful narrative involving a woman with a sinful past and a Pharisee named Simon, this short parable strikes at the core of **religious pride, forgiveness, and genuine worship**. Though brief—just three verses—it unlocks a spiritual principle that echoes through all of Scripture: **those who are most aware of their forgiveness love the most.**

This parable appears in the midst of a real-life confrontation. Jesus is dining at the home of Simon the Pharisee when a woman, identified by her reputation as a sinner, enters uninvited and washes His feet with her tears, dries them with her hair, kisses them, and anoints them with precious ointment. Simon is appalled. Jesus responds not with a theological lecture, but with a parable so simple, so sharp, that it dismantles the Pharisee’s smug superiority and exalts the woman’s heartfelt devotion.

Let us explore the layers of this parable, not only in its doctrinal meaning but also in its moral, spiritual, and practical applications.

### **1. The Full Passage in Context**

*“There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty.*

*And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?*

*Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged.”*

(Luke 7:41–43)

To truly grasp this parable, we must see it **in its narrative setting**, beginning in Luke 7:36 and extending to verse 50. Jesus is not offering a random teaching—He is **exposing Simon’s heart** while **vindicating the woman’s love**.

## 2. The Scene: Two People, One King

### A. Simon the Pharisee: Religious, Rigid, and Righteous in His Own Eyes

Simon had invited Jesus to dine at his house—possibly to evaluate Him, or out of curiosity. However, he failed to extend the basic courtesies of hospitality:

- No water for Jesus' feet (v. 44)
- No kiss of welcome (v. 45)
- No anointing oil (v. 46)

His outward religious form concealed an inward arrogance. Simon viewed Jesus more as a **guest to scrutinize** than a **Savior to worship**.

### B. The Woman: Known Sinner, Now Worshiper

She is not named, but is known in the city as a “sinner”—most likely a prostitute. She enters with a heart full of **love, shame, and reverence**, lavishing Jesus with affection and costly ointment. Her every gesture is an act of **repentant gratitude**.

Simon saw only her past. Jesus saw her heart.

## 3. The Parable Explained: Two Debtors, One Creditor

### A. The Debtors

- One owes **500 pence** (denarii)—equivalent to almost **two years of wages**.
- The other owes **50 pence**—about **two months of wages**.

Though the amounts differ, both are in **debt**. And more importantly, both are **unable to pay**.

### B. The Creditor

He "**frankly forgave them both**." The word “frankly” here means **freely, graciously, unconditionally**.

This reveals:

- God's character as a **merciful forgiver**
- That forgiveness is **not earned**, but **gifted**
- That both sinners—whether notorious or “respectable”—stand in **equal need of grace**

### C. The Question

“Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?”

Jesus doesn't ask who was forgiven more. That's obvious. He asks **who will respond with greater love.**

Simon hesitates but answers correctly:

“I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most.”

Even in his answer, Simon seems reluctant to fully embrace the point.

### 4. The Spiritual Application: Love Grows from Forgiveness

This parable unveils a foundational spiritual law:

**Our capacity to love God grows in proportion to our awareness of how much He has forgiven us.**

#### A. Not the Size of Sin, But the Sense of Sin

Both debtors were unable to pay. Spiritually, all have sinned:

- Romans 3:10 – “There is none righteous, no, not one.”
- Romans 3:23 – “For all have sinned...”

Whether one is guilty of 50 or 500, the issue is **spiritual bankruptcy.**

The woman understood the weight of her sin. Simon did not. Therefore:

- She loved much.
- He loved little.

#### B. False Righteousness Minimizes Love

The self-righteous see little need for forgiveness. As a result, their love is cold, their worship formal, and their heart unmoved.

This parable teaches:

- The **greater your awareness of grace**, the **greater your love.**
- The more deeply you understand your sin, the more **passionately you worship.**

## 5. Jesus Turns to the Woman: Love in Action

*“Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much...”*

(Luke 7:47)

This does not mean she was forgiven **because** she loved. Rather, her love was **the evidence** of her forgiveness.

Love flows from:

- Gratitude
- Humility
- Joy in being restored

She loved much **because she had been forgiven much.**

Contrast this with Simon:

- He showed no love.
- Therefore, his heart revealed that he had **not truly received forgiveness**, nor did he think he needed it.

## 6. Doctrinal Insight: Grace Over Law

This parable reinforces a key New Testament doctrine:

**Justification is by grace, not works.**

Simon, a Pharisee, represented the Law—a system of works, merit, and external righteousness.

The woman represents grace—unworthy, broken, and helpless, but received by faith.

As Paul later wrote:

- **Ephesians 2:8–9** – “By grace are ye saved through faith... not of works...”
- **Romans 4:4–5** – “To him that worketh not, but believeth... his faith is counted for righteousness.”

## 7. A Warning Against Cold Religion

Simon kept all the rules but missed the Redeemer.

He had:

- Theology but no intimacy
- Ceremony but no affection
- Knowledge but no compassion

This parable exposes the **danger of religion without repentance**, and of **orthodoxy without love**.

It reminds us that:

- You can sit at the table with Jesus and still not know Him.
- You can judge others harshly while your own heart is full of pride.

## 8. The Woman: A Portrait of Worship

Her actions teach us the essence of **true worship**:

- **Tears** – Sorrow for sin
- **Hair** – Personal humility
- **Kisses** – Affection for the Savior
- **Ointment** – Sacrificial devotion

She didn't speak, preach, or argue. She worshiped. Her gratitude filled the room with fragrance.

This is the kind of worship Jesus seeks (John 4:23–24).

## 9. The Final Words: Peace for the Forgiven

*“Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.”*

(Luke 7:50)

This echoes the core of the gospel:

- It was her **faith**, not her works, that saved her.
- Forgiveness brings **peace**—with God, within, and into eternity.

Jesus declared her justified before God—fully accepted, fully cleansed, and forever changed.

## 10. Doctrinal Layers and Typology

Character/Element	Represents
Creditor	God
Two Debtors	All sinners (some openly sinful, others secretly proud)
500 Pence	Notorious sins (adultery, theft, etc.)
50 Pence	Respectable sins (pride, indifference)
Forgiveness	Grace through faith
Love	Evidence of salvation
Simon the Pharisee	Religious self-righteousness
The Woman	Penitent sinner turned worshiper

## 11. Spiritual Lessons for the Church

### A. Never Forget What You Were Forgiven

The healthiest Christians are those who **remember what they've been rescued from**.

### B. Gratitude Fuels Worship

Cold, lifeless Christianity often flows from **spiritual amnesia**. Those who see the cross clearly **love deeply**.

### C. True Worship Offends the Proud

Simon was offended. Always remember—**humble worship will look foolish** to the proud, but it is **precious to Christ**.

### D. The Gospel is for the Guilty

This woman had no religious credentials, only **faith and brokenness**—and that was enough for Jesus.

## 12. KJV Cross-References

- **Romans 5:20** – “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”
- **1 Timothy 1:15** – “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...”
- **Psalms 130:3–4** – “If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities...”
- **Luke 18:13** – “God be merciful to me a sinner.”
- **Romans 8:1** – “There is therefore now no condemnation...”

## 13. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- **The Forgiver of Debts**
- **The Searcher of Hearts**
- **The Defender of the Broken**
- **The One who receives worship**
- **The Savior who gives peace**

He does not compare your sins to others. He looks for **repentance** and **faith**.  
He does not weigh your past. He measures your **love**.

## Conclusion

The Parable of the Two Debtors is more than a lesson in gratitude—it is a mirror for our souls.

**Doctrinally**, it reinforces salvation by grace through faith.

**Dispensationally**, it reveals Christ’s heart toward sinners of every stripe.

**Spiritually**, it demands that we ask:

Am I like Simon—critical, cold, and unaware of my need?

Or like the woman—broken, grateful, and full of love?

Two debtors.  
One Savior.  
Only one walks away in peace.

Which one are you?

## **27 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Barren Fig Tree**

*Luke 13:6–9*

**Focus: Israel’s fruitlessness; extended mercy before final judgment**

### **Introduction**

The *Parable of the Barren Fig Tree* is a sobering and overlooked parable in the teachings of Jesus. Though brief, this four-verse lesson carries a weight of prophetic urgency and spiritual warning. Found only in *Luke 13:6–9*, the parable speaks of **Israel’s failure to bear fruit, God’s long-suffering mercy, and a final window of opportunity before judgment falls**. In this scene, a fig tree occupies space in a vineyard, consuming resources but producing nothing of value. The owner returns repeatedly, looking for fruit—and finds none.

This parable appears immediately after a warning in *Luke 13:1–5*, where Jesus tells His audience twice, *“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* It flows directly from the urgency of repentance, making this parable a visual follow-up. The fig tree becomes a symbol of those who presume upon their religious identity, believing they are safe simply because they are planted in the vineyard, while ignoring their **fruitlessness and rebellion**.

Let us now unpack this powerful parable and its doctrinal, prophetic, and spiritual implications.

### **1. The Text of the Parable**

*“He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.*

*Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?*

*And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:*

*And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”*  
(Luke 13:6–9)

## 2. The Vineyard Owner: God the Father

The “certain man” who owns the vineyard is a picture of **God the Father**, the owner of Israel, and ultimately all creation.

Throughout Scripture, the **vineyard** is a common image for **Israel**:

- *Isaiah 5:1–7* – “The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel...”
- *Psalms 80:8–16* – God brought a vine out of Egypt (Israel)
- *Matthew 21:33–46* – Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (another vineyard parable)

God’s relationship to Israel is one of covenant ownership. He planted her, protected her, and expected **fruit**—the fruit of repentance, righteousness, and obedience.

## 3. The Fig Tree: National Israel

The fig tree is a symbol of **Israel’s religious system**, particularly **her leadership**.

Fig trees appear frequently in Scripture in association with Israel:

- *Hosea 9:10* – “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree...”
- *Jeremiah 24* – Two baskets of figs representing good and bad Israelites
- *Matthew 21:19* – Jesus curses a fig tree that has leaves but no fruit

### A. Planted in a Vineyard

This detail is unusual. Normally, fig trees are not planted among vines. This highlights that the tree was **given a privileged position**, just like Israel:

- Given covenants (Romans 9:4)
- Given prophets, laws, temple worship
- Surrounded by God’s blessing

Yet despite this **prime spiritual location**, the fig tree **produces nothing**.

#### 4. Three Years: A Probation Period

*“These three years I come seeking fruit...”*

(Luke 13:7)

##### A. Literal Meaning

- Jesus had been ministering for nearly **three years** at this point.
- For **three years**, He had taught, healed, preached, and called for repentance.
- Still, the nation—particularly the religious elite—remained **barren**.

##### B. Symbolic Meaning

- Three years represents a **complete witness**—a full opportunity.
- It echoes **God’s patience**—waiting, inspecting, hoping for fruit.

But **nothing came**. Despite all the advantages, Israel remained fruitless.

#### 5. “Cut It Down”: The Just Demand for Judgment

*“Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?”*

(Luke 13:7)

##### A. Divine Frustration

This is not anger born of impulsiveness but of **just expectation**. The tree has had:

- **Time** – three years
- **Care** – planted in a vineyard
- **Opportunity** – inspected repeatedly

And yet, it continues to be **unproductive**, draining resources and giving nothing back.

##### B. “Cumbereth the Ground”

The Greek word means to **render useless**, to **deprive the soil** of nutrients. The tree is not just neutral—it is harmful.

This mirrors how the **religious leaders of Israel**:

- Hindered others from entering the kingdom (Matthew 23:13)

- Exploited the people spiritually (Matthew 23:14)
- Had a form of godliness but denied its power

**When religion bears no fruit, it becomes a weight upon the ground.**

## **6. The Vinedresser: Jesus Christ the Intercessor**

*“Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it.”*

(Luke 13:8)

### **A. Jesus Pleads for Mercy**

The vinedresser is Christ Himself, who intercedes on behalf of the unfruitful tree. He asks for **more time** and offers **further effort**.

Here we see:

- **The long-suffering of God** (2 Peter 3:9)
- **The intercession of Christ** (Hebrews 7:25)
- **The offer of mercy before judgment**

### **B. “Dig About It, and Dung It”**

- “Dig” implies **breaking up the hardness**
- “Dung” speaks of **fertilizing**—offering nourishment and grace

This is a picture of Jesus giving **one final season of intense spiritual cultivation**.

## **7. One More Year: A Final Opportunity**

This extra year is **not guaranteed**, but **granted**—a final window of mercy.

Historically, this seems to point to:

- The brief period between Jesus’ resurrection and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.
- A final appeal through the apostles to repent, particularly in the early chapters of Acts.

Yet Israel still refused, culminating in:

- **Persecution of the early Church**
- **Rejection of the apostles**
- **Stoning of Stephen (Acts 7)**
- **Destruction of Jerusalem**

The axe was laid to the root, and the tree was cut down.

## 8. “If Not, Then Cut It Down”: Inevitable Judgment

*“And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.”*  
(Luke 13:9)

There is no third option.

Either:

- The tree bears fruit (repentance, righteousness), or
- The tree is removed in judgment

This reflects the **consistent pattern in Scripture**:

- Noah warned his generation—judgment came.
- Pharaoh was warned through plagues—judgment came.
- Israel rejected prophets—judgment came.

And so the fig tree—**national Israel**—would be removed **temporarily** from her position of blessing.

## 9. Doctrinal and Dispensational Meaning

### A. Israel as the Fig Tree

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, Israel is presented as **privileged but barren**.

This parable summarizes:

- God’s covenant care
- Christ’s patient inspection
- Israel’s persistent fruitlessness

## **B. Temporary Removal**

The “cutting down” refers to:

- The **setting aside** of Israel as the steward of God’s kingdom (Romans 11:11–25)
- The **destruction of Jerusalem and the temple** in 70 AD
- The **transition** to the Church Age, where the gospel is offered to all nations

Israel is not **permanently rejected**, but **temporarily disciplined**.

Romans 11:25 declares:

“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in.”

## **10. Spiritual Application for the Individual**

### **A. Fruitlessness is Serious**

God does not tolerate **spiritual apathy**. He expects:

- Repentance
- Obedience
- Love
- Righteous living

Matthew 3:10:

“And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees...”

### **B. Mercy is Available—but Limited in Time**

God is merciful, but there is a **deadline**.

- **Today** is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2)
- Do not presume on God’s patience
- Eventually, the time of digging and dunging ends

### **C. Christ Intercedes—but We Must Respond**

Jesus pleads for mercy and applies grace—but if there is no change, **judgment still falls**.

## 11. The Balance Between Mercy and Justice

This parable balances:

- **God's mercy:** "Let it alone..."
- **God's justice:** "Cut it down..."

He is not soft or lenient. He is **patient**, yet **righteous**.

Romans 11:22 summarizes it well:

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God..."

## 12. KJV Cross-References

- **Romans 2:4** – "Despisest thou the riches of his goodness... not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"
- **Matthew 21:19** – Jesus curses the fig tree for having leaves but no fruit
- **John 15:6** – "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth... and burned."
- **Isaiah 5:4** – "What could have been done more to my vineyard...?"
- **Hebrews 10:31** – "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

## 13. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- **The Owner's Son**, sent to inspect the vineyard
- **The Vinedresser**, laboring for the fruitless
- **The Intercessor**, pleading for mercy
- **The Judge**, who ultimately will cut down what remains barren

He offers **hope**, **warning**, and **time**—but He will not wait forever.

## Conclusion

The *Parable of the Barren Fig Tree* is a short parable with an eternal message.

**Doctrinally**, it speaks of **Israel's failure, Christ's intercession, and judgment at hand.**

**Dispensationally**, it explains the **transition from Israel to the Church Age.**

**Spiritually**, it warns each of us:

Are we leafy but fruitless?

Are we wasting our soil, or yielding the fruit of repentance?

The Lord is digging. The Lord is fertilizing. The Lord is waiting.

But eventually...

“After that, thou shalt cut it down.”

## **28 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Great Supper**

*Luke 14:15–24*

**Focus: Rejection by Israel, invitation to Gentiles and “outcasts.”**

### **Introduction**

The *Parable of the Great Supper*, found in *Luke 14:15–24*, is one of the most vivid portrayals Jesus gives of **God's gracious invitation, Israel's national rejection, and the broad inclusion of Gentiles and social outcasts.** Spoken during a meal at the house of a prominent Pharisee, this parable flips the religious assumptions of its day upside down. Those who were presumed to be closest to the kingdom—the devout, the elite, the law-keepers—are exposed as the very ones who reject the call of God, while the unexpected and marginalized are brought in by grace.

Like many of Christ's parables, this one is both **a response to a specific statement** and **a broader prophetic revelation.** It rebukes self-righteousness, highlights the urgency of God's invitation, and previews the **Church Age**—when salvation would go beyond Israel and reach the highways and hedges of the world.

Let us explore the meaning of this powerful parable, its doctrinal weight, its dispensational implications, and its personal application to every hearer.

### **1. The Context: A Pharisee's Dinner Table**

Jesus is dining at the house of a chief Pharisee (Luke 14:1), where the setting is steeped in tradition, ritualism, and social rank. There is tension in the room. Jesus has already healed a man with dropsy on the Sabbath, rebuked the guests for choosing the chief seats, and challenged the host to invite the poor instead of the privileged.

Then comes a religious-sounding interjection from one of the dinner guests:

*“Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.”* (Luke 14:15)

It sounds pious, but it reveals a shallow assumption—that **simply being Jewish and religious guaranteed a seat at God’s kingdom table.**

Jesus’ response? A parable that challenges that very presumption.

## **2. The Text of the Parable**

*“A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:  
And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things  
are now ready.”*

(Luke 14:16–17)

Jesus launches into a story about a lavish banquet—symbolizing **the blessings of the Kingdom of God**—and the invitations that go out to the invited guests.

## **3. The Great Supper: God’s Gracious Invitation**

### **A. The “Certain Man”: God the Father**

The “certain man” is clearly a picture of God, who prepares a grand feast—a symbol of:

- Salvation
- Fellowship with Him
- The Kingdom of God

This echoes Old Testament imagery:

- *Isaiah 25:6* – “And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things...”
- *Psalms 23:5* – “Thou preparest a table before me...”

### **B. “Bade Many”**

The initial invitees represent **Israel**, particularly her leaders and people who had the Law, the Prophets, and the covenants (Romans 9:4–5).

This is a **summons**, not a casual request. In Middle Eastern culture, two invitations were typically issued:

1. A general one in advance.
2. A final call when the feast was ready.

Jesus is now giving that **final call**—but Israel is **not ready to respond**.

#### **4. The Excuses: Religious and Worldly Rejection**

*“And they all with one consent began to make excuse.”*  
(Luke 14:18)

Rather than joyful acceptance, the invitees **reject the call**. Their responses are filled with trivial excuses—each one representing a category of distraction that still keeps people from God today.

##### **A. Material Distraction**

*“I have bought a piece of ground...”*

This speaks to those **consumed with possessions**, wealth, and ownership. The kingdom has no appeal when you're chasing real estate and property.

##### **B. Occupational Busyness**

*“I have bought five yoke of oxen...”*

This man is occupied with **career, work, and economic growth**. He wants to “prove” his oxen—he’s too busy “grinding” to respond to God.

##### **C. Relational Ties**

*“I have married a wife...”*

This man places **family above God**. While marriage is honorable, using it as an excuse to reject God’s invitation reveals **disordered priorities**.

##### **D. United Rejection**

All the excuses, though different, have the same result: **refusal**.

**Each man had his reason, but all shared one heart: indifference to the King.**

## **5. The Servant's Report and the Master's Response**

*"Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly..."*  
(Luke 14:21)

### **A. Righteous Anger**

God is gracious—but He is also just. The rejection of His invitation is not neutral—it is an **insult** to His grace.

"The king was wroth..." (Matthew 22:7)

God's wrath here is not arbitrary—it is the just result of **willful rejection**.

### **B. New Invitations**

The master redirects the servant to go out:

- **Into the streets and lanes** of the city
- To **the poor, maimed, halt, and blind**

These represent:

- **Outcasts of Israel**—the humble, broken, and despised who were ignored by religious elites
- Those who **knew their need** and gladly accepted the invitation

## **6. Beyond the City: The Gentile Mission**

*"And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."*  
(Luke 14:22–23)

### **A. "Highways and Hedges"**

This points to **Gentile lands**—those **outside Israel**, beyond the city walls.

This reflects:

- The **Great Commission** to all nations (Matthew 28:19)

- The **grafting in** of Gentiles (Romans 11:17)
- The **Church Age**, when people of every tongue, tribe, and background are welcomed

## B. “Compel Them”

Not by force, but by **earnest persuasion**. The word means to **urge strongly**—like Paul reasoning with Jews and Gentiles in synagogues and marketplaces.

God desires:

“That my house may be filled.” (v. 23)

The **gracious will of God** is to fill His kingdom with all who will respond.

## 7. The Final Warning

*“For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.”*  
(Luke 14:24)

Jesus closes the parable with a solemn warning: **those who rejected the invitation will not be invited again.**

## A. Finality of Judgment

This reflects:

- The **setting aside of national Israel** (Romans 11:7–10)
- The consequence of **repeated unbelief**
- The principle of **missed opportunity**

The feast goes on **without them**. Grace is available, but not forever.

## 8. Doctrinal and Dispensational Breakdown

Element	Represents
The Great Supper	Salvation; Kingdom blessings
Certain Man (Host)	God the Father
Initial Guests	National Israel, especially religious elite

Element	Represents
Excuses	Rejection due to materialism, work, relationships
Servant	Christ, then apostles and early Church
Streets and Lanes	Outcasts of Israel (publicans, sinners, broken)
Highways and Hedges	Gentiles; those beyond the covenant
“Compel them”	Evangelism and global missions
Final Exclusion	Judicial hardening of Israel (Romans 11)

## 9. Parallels to the Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matthew 22)

Though similar, the parables differ slightly in details. *Matthew 22* includes:

- The King's wrath and destruction of murderers (prophetic of 70 A.D.)
- A man without a wedding garment (picture of false conversion)

*Luke 14* emphasizes:

- The social scandal of grace
- The broad, relentless scope of the invitation

Together, they provide a complete view of **Israel's rejection**, **Gentile inclusion**, and **God's redemptive persistence**.

## 10. Spiritual Applications

### A. Don't Assume You're In

Like the man who said, “*Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom,*” many assume heaven is guaranteed. But only those who **respond to God's invitation** are admitted.

### B. Religious People Can Miss the Kingdom

The initial invitees were religious but **disinterested**. Don't let religious ritual **replace relationship** with Christ.

### C. Excuses Are Fatal

None of the excuses were evil. But they were **sufficient to reject God**. Comfort, busyness, and family—when elevated above God—become idolatrous.

#### **D. The Broken Are Welcome**

The maimed, poor, and blind were not second-tier guests—they were **God’s honored guests**. If you know your need, you are welcome at His table.

#### **E. God Wants His House Full**

Evangelism matters. Missions matter. We must go to the highways and hedges.

#### **F. The Door Will Close**

Eventually, the offer ends. Those who reject it will not taste of the supper.

### **11. KJV Cross-References**

- **Isaiah 55:1–3** – “Come, buy wine and milk without money...”
- **Matthew 22:2–14** – Wedding banquet parable
- **Romans 10:21** – “All day long I have stretched forth my hands...”
- **Romans 11:11** – “Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles...”
- **Revelation 19:9** – “Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.”

### **12. Christ at the Center**

Jesus is:

- The **Servant** delivering the invitation
- The **Supper**—He is the Bread of Life
- The **Judge** who declares who will taste and who will not

He is the **cornerstone the builders rejected**, and yet the **host of the feast** who welcomes the lowly, the far off, and the unworthy.

### **Conclusion**

The *Parable of the Great Supper* is not just about a banquet—it is about a **kingdom invitation from God** that demands a response. Israel’s religious elite, confident in their place, were the very ones who **rejected the call**. Meanwhile, the poor, the humble, the outcasts—and ultimately the Gentile world—were welcomed in.

**Doctrinally**, the parable teaches Israel’s rejection and the inclusion of the Gentiles.

**Dispensationally**, it reveals the **transition from Israel to the Church Age**.

**Spiritually**, it calls every person to stop making excuses and **come to the table**.

God has prepared the feast. The servant has issued the call.

Will you come while there’s still room?

## **29 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Rich Fool**

*Luke 12:16–21*

**Focus: Vanity of earthly treasure; call to lay up heavenly riches**

### **Introduction**

The *Parable of the Rich Fool* stands as one of Jesus’ most sobering teachings on the subject of wealth, mortality, and eternity. Found in *Luke 12:16–21*, it offers a sharp warning against the illusion of security found in material abundance and the arrogance of living for self while ignoring God. Jesus told this parable in response to a seemingly unrelated dispute about inheritance—yet He masterfully redirected the conversation to the heart of the issue: **where is your treasure?**

This brief yet powerful parable pierces through modern notions of success, confronting the reader with a choice between **earthly riches that perish** and **heavenly riches that endure**. It’s not a condemnation of money, but of misplaced trust, self-centered thinking, and the dangerous lie that tomorrow is promised.

Let us explore the spiritual, doctrinal, and prophetic implications of this parable and how its message rings even more loudly in our materialistic age.

### **1. The Setting: A Dispute Over Inheritance**

The parable doesn’t emerge in a vacuum. It is triggered by an interruption:

*“And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.”*

(Luke 12:13)

The man’s request was common in Jewish society—rabbis were often asked to settle legal disputes. But Jesus saw deeper. Rather than act as an arbitrator, He used the moment to **expose the deeper danger of covetousness.**

*“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”*

(Luke 12:15)

With this, Jesus sets the stage for a parable that demolishes the illusion that life is measured by material gain.

## **2. The Parable Begins: A Rich Man’s Prosperity**

*“The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:”*

(Luke 12:16)

### **A. The Source of Wealth**

Notice that it was the **ground** that brought forth plentifully. This abundance was **not solely the man’s doing**—it was due to **God’s provision** (see Deuteronomy 8:18). Yet the rich man never acknowledges God as the giver.

### **B. He Was Already Rich**

The man was already well-off before the harvest. The text describes him not just as a man who became rich, but as one who was **already rich** and then **grew even richer**. He is a picture of the self-sufficient, self-satisfied man.

This raises a spiritual question:

When our prosperity increases, do our prayers increase—or our plans?

## **3. The Internal Dialogue: “What Shall I Do?”**

*“And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?”*

(Luke 12:17)

The man begins to speak—**not to God, not to others, but to himself.**

#### **A. The Isolation of Greed**

- There is no mention of **God, family, or neighbors.**
- His problem is not that he lacks food, but that he has **too much.**
- The only voice he listens to is **his own.**

Covetousness leads to **spiritual isolation**—it turns inward, making the self the center of the universe.

### **4. The Fool's Plan: Bigger Barns, Bigger Dreams**

*“This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.”*

(Luke 12:18)

This is a man obsessed with **preservation and expansion.** He is not wasteful—but neither is he generous.

#### **A. Personal Pronouns Dominate**

Notice the repetition: “I,” “my,” “my,” “I,” “my,” “my,” “my.” This is the **gospel of self**—his god is **himself.**

#### **B. A Life of Storage, Not Stewardship**

Instead of asking, “What does God want me to do with this surplus?” he says, “How can I stockpile it for myself?”

This is a man who thinks **life is about accumulation.**

### **5. The Goal: A Life of Ease**

*“And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.”*

(Luke 12:19)

#### **A. The False Gospel of Comfort**

This is the philosophy of hedonism—**live for pleasure**, rest, and indulgence. The man envisions a **retirement of self-satisfaction**, believing he’s in control of time and outcomes.

## **B. He Speaks to His Soul**

Ironically, he addresses his **soul**—but offers it **no eternal nourishment**. He confuses **temporal comfort** with **eternal security**.

**He prepared for retirement but not for judgment.**

## **6. The Divine Interruption: “Thou Fool”**

*“But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”*

(Luke 12:20)

This is the first time **God is mentioned**—and He delivers a **sudden, stunning judgment**.

### **A. “Thou Fool”**

The man was not called a fool by others—but by **God**. Biblically, a fool is not one who lacks intelligence, but one who:

- **Ignores God** (Psalm 14:1)
- **Lives without regard for eternity**
- **Trusts in riches rather than the Lord**

### **B. “This Night”**

While the man was planning for **“many years,”** God says, *“This night.”* Death comes **suddenly and unexpectedly**.

### **C. “Thy Soul Shall Be Required”**

His **body had everything**, but his **soul had nothing**. Now, his soul is demanded—not requested. It is a debt he cannot negotiate.

This is the **divine audit**—and he is found **bankrupt**.

## **7. The Tragic End: Eternal Loss**

*“Then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?”*

This echoes **Ecclesiastes 2:18–19**, where Solomon laments the vanity of laboring and leaving everything to someone who didn’t earn it.

The rich fool’s wealth:

- Cannot buy back his life
- Will be **left behind**
- Will be **distributed without his control**

## **8. The Moral: Rich Toward God**

*“So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”*

(Luke 12:21)

### **A. Two Types of Wealth**

Jesus contrasts two kinds of treasure:

1. **For self** – earthly, fading, insecure
2. **Toward God** – eternal, spiritual, rewarding

Being “rich toward God” means:

- Trusting in Christ
- Using resources for His kingdom
- Living with **eternity in view**

Matthew 6:19–21 echoes this truth:

*“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven...”*

## **9. Doctrinal and Prophetic Insight**

### **A. Vanity of Earthly Wealth**

This parable reinforces what the Old Testament repeatedly taught:

- *Job 1:21* – “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb...”

- *Ecclesiastes* – Wealth is vanity without God.

## **B. The Deception of Prosperity**

Revelation 3:17 describes the Laodicean church:

*“Thou sayest, I am rich... and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable...”*

The Rich Fool is a Laodicean prototype—materially rich, spiritually bankrupt.

## **C. Sudden Judgment**

This parable previews the sudden nature of **personal death** and **prophetic judgment** (1 Thessalonians 5:3).

# **10. Spiritual Applications**

## **A. Life Is Not Found in Abundance**

- Your net worth is not your **soul’s worth**.
- Life is found in **Christ**, not accumulation.

## **B. Plan for Eternity, Not Just Retirement**

- We prepare for school, work, and retirement—but what about **eternity**?
- The Rich Fool made plans for **everything except his soul**.

## **C. Don’t Wait**

- He thought he had **years**, but had **hours**.
- Today is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2)

## **D. Be Rich Toward God**

- Use your time, talents, and treasure for **eternal things**.
- Store treasure in heaven by:
  - Supporting gospel work
  - Helping the poor
  - Worshiping with sacrifice
  - Living righteously

## 11. KJV Cross-References

- **Psalm 49:16–17** – “Be not thou afraid when one is made rich...”
- **Ecclesiastes 5:10** – “He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied...”
- **Proverbs 11:4** – “Riches profit not in the day of wrath...”
- **1 Timothy 6:7** – “For we brought nothing into this world...”
- **James 4:13–14** – “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow...”

## 12. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **true Treasure** (Colossians 2:3)
- The **Giver of eternal life** (John 10:28)
- The **Owner of your soul** (Ezekiel 18:4)

Only He can make you **rich toward God**.

He calls not just for your savings—but for **your surrender**.

## Conclusion

The *Parable of the Rich Fool* is not a condemnation of wealth—but a **call to wisdom**. It warns against living as if **this world is all there is**, while neglecting the one thing that lasts forever—**your soul**.

**Doctrinally**, it teaches the vanity of earthly wealth.

**Prophetically**, it warns of sudden judgment.

**Spiritually**, it calls us to live for eternity.

The barns may be full. The calendar may be full.

But what if tonight—**your soul is required**?

Are you rich in this world...

or **rich toward God**?

## **30 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Faithful and Evil Servants**

*Matthew 24:45–51; Luke 12:42–48*

**Focus: Watchfulness and stewardship during the Master’s absence**

### **Introduction**

As we reach the final entry in this 40-part series on the parables of Jesus, we arrive at one of the most penetrating and sobering lessons of all—*The Parable of the Faithful and Evil Servants*. Found in both *Matthew 24:45–51* and *Luke 12:42–48*, this parable concludes a series of eschatological teachings delivered by Jesus to prepare His followers for His absence and to warn them of His sudden return.

At its core, this parable is about **stewardship, accountability, and readiness**. It answers a crucial question: **How should believers live in the time between Christ’s ascension and His return?** In an age of delay and spiritual apathy, Jesus exposes the danger of neglect, abuse of authority, and presumption upon His grace. The parable divides the servants into two types—**faithful and wise** or **evil and unprepared**—and makes clear that the returning King will judge them accordingly.

Let us now walk carefully through the meaning, message, and implications of this final parable in the series.

### **1. The Context: The Olivet Discourse**

Both versions of the parable occur in the context of Jesus’ **Olivet Discourse**, where He addresses:

- The signs of His Second Coming
- The future tribulation
- The need for **watchfulness and faithfulness**

In Matthew 24:3, the disciples ask:

“What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”

Jesus answers with warnings of deception, persecution, and judgment—and ends with this parable as a practical call to **personal responsibility** during the time of waiting.

## 2. The Text of the Parable

*“Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?”*

*“Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”*

(Matthew 24:45–46)

## 3. The Master and His Household

### A. The Master: Jesus Christ

The “lord” in the parable clearly represents **Jesus Christ**, who has ascended into heaven but promises to return.

- He is the **owner of the house**
- He entrusts His servants with responsibility during His absence
- He returns at a time **not expected**

### B. The Household

The “household” represents **God’s people**—specifically those under the care and leadership of spiritual servants:

- Pastors, teachers, spiritual leaders
- Those entrusted with **feeding, guiding, and serving** God’s flock

1 Peter 5:2–4 echoes this imagery:

“Feed the flock of God... and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory...”

## 4. The Faithful and Wise Servant

*“Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.”*

(Matthew 24:46)

### A. His Role: Feeding Others

He gives “meat in due season”—not just spiritual food in general, but **timely, appropriate nourishment** for the flock. He is diligent, alert, and committed to his calling.

## **B. His Character: Faithful and Wise**

- **Faithful** – He keeps his responsibilities regardless of how long the Master tarries.
- **Wise** – He understands the times, anticipates the Master’s return, and lives with eternity in view.

## **C. His Reward: Rulership**

*“He shall make him ruler over all his goods.”* (v. 47)

This reflects **millennial rewards** and **eternal stewardship**. Christ will reward the faithful with **greater authority** in His coming Kingdom (cf. Luke 19:17).

## **5. The Evil Servant: A Portrait of Apostasy**

*“But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;”*  
(Matthew 24:48)

This servant is in stark contrast to the first.

### **A. His Error: Delay Mentality**

He doesn’t deny the Master’s return—he just assumes it’s far off. This **delay mentality** leads to:

- Complacency
- Carelessness
- Carnality

This attitude reflects the apostate heart in the last days (2 Peter 3:4):

*“Where is the promise of his coming?”*

### **B. His Behavior: Abuse and Drunkenness**

*“And shall begin to smite his fellowservants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;”*  
(Matthew 24:49)

His spiritual decline shows itself in two ways:

1. **Abuse of Authority** – He harms fellow believers rather than serves them.
2. **Worldly Fellowship** – He aligns with the world (“drunken”) instead of with Christ.

This is a chilling picture of religious leaders who:

- Prey on the sheep rather than protect them
- Love luxury more than labor
- Profess Christ but deny Him in action

## 6. The Sudden Return of the Master

*“The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him...”*  
(Matthew 24:50)

### A. Unaware and Unprepared

The evil servant is caught off guard. He is not watching, not waiting, not working.

This echoes the warning in *Matthew 24:36*:

*“But of that day and hour knoweth no man...”*

### B. The Surprise of Judgment

The return of Christ will be:

- **Unexpected** for the unfaithful
- **Sudden** in execution
- **Final** in consequence

## 7. The Consequence: Severe Judgment

*“And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

(Matthew 24:51)

### A. “Cut Him Asunder”

This is not metaphorical—it refers to **violent and complete judgment**. It may reflect:

- Physical death
- Eternal separation
- Loss of spiritual standing

## B. “Portion with the Hypocrites”

Though he looked like a servant, he is now grouped with **pretenders**. His **true character is exposed**.

## C. “Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth”

This phrase, used elsewhere by Jesus (Matthew 8:12; 13:42), speaks of:

- **Hell** – conscious, eternal punishment
- **Regret** – sorrow and anger
- **Finality** – irreversible judgment

This servant **was never truly saved**. He bore the title but **not the heart of a servant**.

## 8. Luke’s Version: Degrees of Accountability

In *Luke 12:42–48*, Jesus adds detail to the parable, emphasizing **levels of punishment** based on knowledge and behavior.

*“That servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself... shall be beaten with many stripes.*

*But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes...”\**

(Luke 12:47–48)

### A. Greater Knowledge = Greater Accountability

Those who have access to truth, leadership, and light will be judged more severely for disobedience.

James 3:1 echoes this:

*“Be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.”*

### B. All Will Be Judged

Even those with **less understanding** are not excused—but judged more mercifully.

### C. The Principle

*“Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”* (Luke 12:48)

This is a divine principle of stewardship: **Privilege demands responsibility**.

## 9. Doctrinal and Dispensational Meaning

### A. Church Age Responsibility

This parable reflects the **Church Age**, where believers await Christ's return and must:

- Be faithful stewards
- Watch and serve diligently
- Resist worldliness and pride

### B. Judgment Seat of Christ

For true believers, this points to the **Bema seat**, where rewards are given or lost (1 Corinthians 3:13–15).

### C. Great White Throne

For false professors (like the evil servant), this points to the **final judgment**—where hypocrisy is exposed and punishment is eternal (Revelation 20:11–15).

### D. Application to Tribulation Saints

Doctrinally, this parable also has a Tribulation application—warning those alive at the time of Christ's Second Coming to remain faithful during persecution and delay.

## 10. Spiritual Applications

### A. Are You a Faithful Servant?

- Are you feeding others spiritually?
- Are you living as if Christ could return tonight?

### B. Watchfulness Is Not Optional

The entire parable is rooted in this command:

*“Watch therefore...”* (Matthew 24:42)

This means:

- Staying in the Word
- Avoiding spiritual laziness

- Guarding your heart from sin

### **C. Titles Don't Save**

Being called a “servant” doesn’t make you saved. The evil servant looked like the real thing—but was a hypocrite.

### **D. God Sees What You Do in His Absence**

How you live “while the Master is away” reveals whether you truly love Him.

## **11. KJV Cross-References**

- **1 Corinthians 4:2** – “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
- **Matthew 25:13** – “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour...”
- **Revelation 3:11** – “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”
- **Titus 2:13** – “Looking for that blessed hope...”
- **1 Thessalonians 5:6** – “Let us not sleep... but let us watch and be sober.”

## **12. Christ at the Center**

Jesus is:

- The **Lord of the household**
- The **Coming King**
- The **Judge of every servant**
- The **Rewarder of the faithful**
- The **Punisher of the hypocrite**

His return is not just an event—it is a **reckoning**.

## **Conclusion**

*The Parable of the Faithful and Evil Servants* brings this 40-part parable series to a powerful end. It reminds us that the time between Christ’s departure and return is not a vacation—it is a **sacred stewardship**.

**Doctrinally**, it warns against spiritual laziness and false profession.

**Dispensationally**, it prepares both Church Age believers and Tribulation saints for the Lord's sudden return.

**Spiritually**, it demands that we ask:

Am I faithfully feeding others—or serving myself?

Am I watching—or drifting?

Am I wearing the title of “servant” while abusing the house?

Because one day, sooner than we think...

*“The Lord of that servant shall come...”*

And when He does—

Will He find you watching...

Or sleeping?

### **31 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Watchful Servants**

*Luke 12:35–40*

**Focus: Readiness for the Lord's return; direct tie to Second Advent**

#### **Introduction**

Few parables capture the urgency and personal accountability of Christ's return more vividly than *The Parable of the Watchful Servants*. Found in *Luke 12:35–40*, this brief yet powerful illustration comes in the middle of Jesus' teaching on stewardship, treasure, and faith. It calls His followers to live with spiritual alertness, keeping their hearts and lives in constant preparation for His coming.

Unlike some of His parables that center around agricultural metaphors or financial stewardship, this one uses the imagery of **household servants**, **wedding feasts**, and **unexpected visits**—all common and relatable elements in first-century life. The scene is clear: a master is away at a wedding, and his servants are to be dressed, alert, and ready to open the door the moment he returns.

While this parable certainly has personal and moral application for all believers, its **primary doctrinal interpretation is prophetic**, pointing directly to the **Second Advent of Jesus Christ**, when He returns after the Tribulation to establish His Kingdom. In that day,

the reward will be real, the judgment final, and the servants forever separated into the faithful and the unprepared.

Let's dive into the layers of this rich parable and understand its full theological and devotional significance.

## 1. The Text of the Parable

*“Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;  
And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding;  
that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.”*  
(Luke 12:35–36)

## 2. The Setting: Household Servants Awaiting Their Lord

Jesus is addressing His disciples, urging them to:

- **Live expectantly**
- **Stay ready**
- **Watch with eagerness and diligence**

The parable places us in a home, with a **lord (master)** gone to a **wedding feast**, and **servants** left behind to keep the household ready for his return.

### A. The Lord: Jesus Christ

The master in the parable represents **Jesus Himself**, who after His first coming, death, and resurrection:

- Has gone to the Father (Luke 19:12)
- Is now preparing to return (John 14:3)
- Will come suddenly, and at an hour many do not expect (Matthew 24:44)

### B. The Servants: Believers (and Doctrinally, Tribulation Saints)

These represent **those who profess to serve Christ**, and especially those who are alive and waiting during the **time leading up to His Second Coming**.

### 3. “Let Your Loins Be Girded” – The Call to Readiness

*“Let your loins be girded about...”*

(Luke 12:35)

This phrase comes from a common Eastern practice. Long robes would be pulled up and tucked into a belt to allow mobility—used when preparing for work, battle, or travel.

#### A. Girded Loins = Active Readiness

In spiritual terms, it means:

- Being **alert, not asleep**
- Ready for **immediate obedience**
- Positioned for **spiritual labor**

This echoes **Ephesians 6:14**, where believers are told to:

*“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth...”*

Jesus isn’t calling for passive waiting, but **watchful service**.

### 4. “Your Lights Burning” – Spiritual Vigilance

*“...and your lights burning.”*

(Luke 12:35)

The burning lamps signify:

- **Spiritual awareness**
- **Witness and testimony**
- **Guidance in the darkness**

This parallels the image in *Matthew 25* with the wise virgins who had oil in their lamps.

**Watchfulness is not anxiety—it’s faith in motion.**

It’s not about paranoia—it’s about **living daily as if Jesus may return at any moment**.

### 5. The Lord Returns from the Wedding

*“Men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding...”*  
(Luke 12:36)

### **A. The Wedding Supper in Prophecy**

This alludes to a major prophetic sequence:

- **The Rapture** of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)
- Followed by the **Marriage Supper of the Lamb** in heaven (Revelation 19:7–9)
- And then the **Second Advent**, when Christ returns **with His saints** (Revelation 19:11–14)

This parable fits into that timeline. The master returns **after the wedding**—which aligns with Christ returning **after the marriage supper**, bringing **His reward with Him** (Revelation 22:12).

### **B. Immediate Opening**

The servants are to “open unto him immediately.” They don’t scramble or delay—they’re ready.

## **6. The Reward: The Master Will Serve Them**

*“Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.”*  
(Luke 12:37)

This is one of the **most astonishing promises** in all of Jesus’ teaching.

### **A. Role Reversal**

The master becomes the servant—a complete reversal of status, just as Jesus did at the Last Supper (John 13:4–5).

This shows:

- The **humility** of Christ
- The **reward** of faithfulness
- The **intimacy of the Kingdom**

Revelation 3:20 speaks of a similar promise:

*“I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*

## **7. Multiple Watches: Prolonged Delay**

*“And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.”*

(Luke 12:38)

In Jewish reckoning:

- First Watch: 6 PM – 9 PM
- Second Watch: 9 PM – 12 AM
- Third Watch: 12 AM – 3 AM

The mention of second or third watch indicates:

- **Long delay**
- **Weariness for those waiting**
- **Temptation to sleep**

Yet, the faithful stay alert—**not discouraged by delay**.

This speaks prophetically to the **2,000-year delay** between Christ’s ascension and His return.

## **8. The Warning: The Thief in the Night**

*“And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come,*

*he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.”*

(Luke 12:39)

### **A. Jesus as a “Thief”**

This echoes **1 Thessalonians 5:2** and **Revelation 3:3**, where Christ comes like a thief—not to steal, but to **arrive unexpectedly**.

### **B. The Goodman**

The homeowner represents:

- A professing believer
- A leader responsible for the house
- One caught **off guard** due to negligence

### **C. Spiritual Meaning**

If you **knew the hour**, you would prepare. But since you **don't**, you must live in **constant readiness**.

## **9. “Be Ye Therefore Ready Also” – The Personal Application**

*“Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”*  
(Luke 12:40)

### **A. This is a Command, Not a Suggestion**

Jesus calls His followers to:

- **Stay dressed**
- **Keep their lamps lit**
- **Live expectantly**

### **B. Christ Could Come at Any Time**

For the Church, this points to the **Rapture**.

For Israel and the Tribulation saints, this points to the **Second Advent**.

In both, the call is the same: **Watch, serve, stay awake**.

## **10. Doctrinal and Dispensational Insights**

### **A. For the Church**

This parable speaks to the **Church Age**, urging saints to be:

- Sober and vigilant (1 Peter 5:8)
- Alert to the times (Romans 13:11)
- Living holy lives in expectation (Titus 2:13)

## **B. For Tribulation Saints**

Doctrinally, the parable applies most directly to those alive at the end of the Tribulation:

- Jewish remnant waiting for their Messiah
- Gentile believers enduring the Great Tribulation

They are urged to:

- Remain faithful
- Not succumb to the Antichrist
- Prepare for Christ's visible return

## **11. Spiritual Applications for Today**

### **A. Stay Spiritually Dressed**

Don't let complacency cause you to "undress" spiritually. Remain clothed in:

- **Righteousness** (Revelation 19:8)
- **Truth** (Ephesians 6:14)
- **Humility** (1 Peter 5:5)

### **B. Keep Your Light Burning**

Maintain:

- **Fellowship with Christ**
- **A heart in the Word**
- **A testimony in the world**

### **C. Be Ready to Open**

Don't hesitate. Live in such a way that **you won't be ashamed at His coming** (1 John 2:28).

### **D. Don't Sleep Through the Watch**

The delay is part of the test. Will you stay awake when the world is asleep?

## **12. KJV Cross-References**

- **Matthew 25:13** – “Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour...”
- **1 Thessalonians 5:6** – “Let us not sleep... but let us watch and be sober.”
- **Revelation 16:15** – “Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth...”
- **Romans 13:11** – “It is high time to awake out of sleep...”
- **Titus 2:13** – “Looking for that blessed hope...”

### 13. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **Master returning from the wedding**
- The **One who knocks**
- The **Judge of readiness**
- The **Rewarder of the faithful**
- The **Thief who surprises the unprepared**

He is not delaying because He forgot—but because He is **longsuffering** and not willing that any should perish (2 Peter 3:9).

### Conclusion

The *Parable of the Watchful Servants* is not just a call to alertness—it is a lifestyle of **joyful expectation, purposeful service, and unshakable hope** in the coming King.

**Doctrinally**, it points to the **Second Advent**—Christ’s visible return after the Tribulation. **Dispensationally**, it prepares both **Church Age believers** and **Tribulation saints** for the critical importance of watchfulness.

**Spiritually**, it challenges us to live each day in readiness.

Are your loins girded?

Are your lights burning?

Are you awake—or asleep?

Because at an hour you think not...

*“The Son of man cometh.”*

## **32 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders**

Matthew 7:24–27

**Focus: Obedience to Christ’s words as a solid foundation**

### **Introduction**

*The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders* is the climactic conclusion to Jesus’ **Sermon on the Mount** (Matthew 5–7). It is the final challenge, the last call, the sobering reality check after a series of revolutionary teachings. Here, Jesus uses simple but profound imagery: two builders, two foundations, one storm. The story is short, yet its implications are eternal.

At first glance, both builders seem similar. They both hear the same teachings. They both build houses. They both experience the same storm. But the end result couldn’t be more different. One house stands; the other collapses. The difference lies in **what cannot be seen**—the foundation.

The parable is a call not just to hear the words of Christ, but to **do them**. It separates true disciples from mere professors, wise men from fools, stability from collapse, and ultimately, life from destruction.

Let us now examine the doctrinal weight, spiritual urgency, and eternal wisdom contained in this foundational parable.

### **1. The Text of the Parable**

*“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them,  
I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:  
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that  
house;  
and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.  
And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not,  
shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:  
And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that  
house;  
and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”*  
(Matthew 7:24–27)

## 2. The Setting: Conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount

Jesus had just finished delivering the most transformative sermon in human history—covering:

- The Beatitudes
- Heart-level righteousness
- The Lord’s Prayer
- Warnings about false prophets
- The narrow way that leads to life

Now He presents a **choice**—not between good and bad men, but between **wise and foolish builders**. The difference is not knowledge, but **obedience**.

**Hearing is not enough. It is only in doing that you are truly wise.**

## 3. The Two Builders: Outward Similarities, Inner Contrasts

### A. Both Hear the Words

Each man heard the same teaching:

- They sat under the same sermon
- They knew the truth
- They were exposed to divine wisdom

Yet only one obeys. This immediately echoes James 1:22:

*“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*

### B. Both Build Houses

The house represents:

- One’s **life**
- One’s **character**
- One’s **eternal destiny**

Both men construct something. They both labor. Both may appear successful—until the storm comes.

### C. Both Face the Storm

Note: Jesus doesn't say "if" the storm comes, but **when**.

Storms represent:

- Trials and pressures in life
- Final judgment
- The Day of the Lord

The wise man's house stands. The foolish man's house falls.

## 4. The Foundation: Rock vs. Sand

### A. The Rock: Obedience to Christ

*"...heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them..."*

The rock is not just **Christ**, but specifically, **obedience to His Word**. This is not salvation by works, but salvation evidenced by works.

Luke's version adds detail:

*"...dug deep, and laid the foundation on a rock..."* (Luke 6:48)

This digging speaks of effort, intentionality, and **heart-deep discipleship**.

### B. The Sand: Superficial Religion

The foolish man hears the same words, but **does not act on them**. His foundation is shallow—likely easy, culturally acceptable, and built for show.

He may:

- Attend church
- Quote Scripture
- Appear moral

But without obedience, his house is doomed.

## 5. The Storm: The Final Test

*“And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house...”*

The storm represents both:

1. **Life’s inevitable trials**
2. **The final judgment of God**

This echoes prophetic warnings like:

- *Ezekiel 13:10–15*, where false prophets build walls with untempered mortar, and the Lord brings a storm.
- *1 Corinthians 3:13*, where every work is tested by fire.

#### **A. The Wise Man’s House Stands**

- It is battered but not broken.
- It is shaken but not destroyed.

#### **B. The Foolish Man’s House Falls—“And Great Was the Fall”**

This is a **total collapse**. The man loses everything because **his foundation was never real**. **Hell is not just for the ignorant or evil—but also for those who merely heard and never obeyed.**

### **6. Doctrinal Meaning: The True Disciple**

This parable highlights the difference between:

- **Professors and possessors**
- **Spectators and disciples**
- **Religious hearers and obedient followers**

True faith is always **active**, never passive. Jesus is not looking for fans—He is calling for **followers** who obey.

“Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (Luke 6:46)

### **7. The Parable and Judgment Day**

This parable fits closely with *Matthew 7:21–23*, where Jesus declares:

*“Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord... and then will I profess unto them, I never knew you...”*

The wise man is **saved**, not because of works, but because his obedience **proved** his faith.

The foolish man is **lost**, not due to ignorance, but due to **refusal to obey** what he already knew.

This matches the warning in *Hebrews 2:1–3*:

*“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?”*

## **8. Spiritual Applications**

### **A. Are You Building Wisely?**

- Are you obeying the Word or simply hearing it?
- Are you building a **life** that can withstand trials and judgment?

### **B. Dig Deep**

The wise man digs to reach the rock. This takes:

- Effort
- Repentance
- Humility

Superficial faith will not survive.

### **C. Don't Confuse Information with Transformation**

You can attend church, memorize Scripture, and even teach others—but if you don't **obey**, you are building on sand.

### **D. Storms Are Coming**

Whether it's:

- A diagnosis
- A betrayal
- A death

- Or the final judgment

Only the house on the rock will stand.

### 9. Parallels in Scripture

Text	Parallel Theme
James 1:22–25	Be doers, not hearers
Ezekiel 33:31–32	People hear but will not do
1 Corinthians 3:11–15	Foundation and testing by fire
Luke 6:46–49	Expanded version of this parable
Proverbs 10:25	“The wicked is no more: but the righteous is an everlasting foundation.”

### 10. KJV Cross-References

- **Psalm 18:2** – “The Lord is my rock...”
- **Deuteronomy 32:4** – “He is the Rock...”
- **Isaiah 28:16** – “Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone...”
- **1 Peter 2:6** – “He that believeth on him shall not be confounded.”
- **2 Timothy 2:19** – “The foundation of God standeth sure...”

### 11. Obedience: The Test of Love

Jesus said in *John 14:15*:

*“If ye love me, keep my commandments.”*

Obedience is not **legalism**—it is **love in action**. The wise builder obeys **because he knows and trusts the Master**.

## 12. Why the Fall Was So Great

*“And great was the fall of it.”*

This phrase doesn’t just refer to physical collapse—but to:

- **Eternal separation from God**
- **Irrecoverable loss**
- **The shock of self-deception exposed**

This is the crash of every false assurance:

- “I thought I was saved...”
- “I thought believing was enough...”
- “I thought hearing the Word was doing the Word...”

## 13. Modern Warnings

In an age of:

- Casual Christianity
- Cultural church attendance
- Tickled ears and easy grace

This parable demands:

**What are you building your life on?**

Feel-good sermons, emotional moments, and shallow decisions **will not withstand the storm.**

Only a life **founded on Christ and lived in obedience to His Word** will endure.

## 14. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **Preacher** of the sermon
- The **Rock** we build upon

- The **Judge** of every foundation
- The **Savior** who invites us to obey

He is not just a **teacher to be admired**, but a **Lord to be followed**.

## Conclusion

*The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders* is more than a Sunday School story. It is Jesus' final call in the Sermon on the Mount—**an altar call in parable form**.

**Doctrinally**, it separates the true believer from the deceived professor.

**Spiritually**, it reveals that life's stability and eternity's security depend on **obedience to Christ**.

**Practically**, it challenges each of us to examine what we are building, how we are building, and **on what foundation**.

The storms are coming.

Will your house stand—or fall?

“Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only...” (James 1:22)

## 33 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the New Cloth on an Old Garment

*Matthew 9:16*

**Focus: The incompatibility of old Judaism and new covenant grace**

### Introduction

Among the briefest parables Jesus ever spoke, *The Parable of the New Cloth on an Old Garment* in *Matthew 9:16* contains a remarkably profound spiritual message. Though delivered in a single sentence, its meaning unveils a crucial dispensational transition in redemptive history—the arrival of **new covenant grace**, and its total **incompatibility with the old religious system of Judaism**.

This parable was not delivered in isolation. It came as part of Jesus' response to a question about **fasting**, posed by the disciples of John the Baptist. Beneath the surface of their question was an assumption: Jesus and His disciples must follow the **traditional practices**

of the law to be spiritual. Jesus responded with three illustrations: a **wedding**, a **cloth**, and **wineskins**—each building on the theme that **He had not come to patch up the old system**, but to bring in **something entirely new**.

In this essay, we'll unpack the historical context, doctrinal implications, and prophetic significance of this short parable. We will discover why trying to sew grace onto the garment of legalism will result not in healing—but in tearing.

## 1. The Text of the Parable

*“No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.”*

(Matthew 9:16)

Parallel versions appear in:

- *Mark 2:21*
- *Luke 5:36*

Luke's version adds:

*“No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old...”*

This emphasizes not just the patch, but the idea that both garments are **wholly distinct**.

## 2. The Setting: A Question About Fasting

This parable was spoken in response to a sincere question:

*“Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?”*

(Matthew 9:14)

The question came from **John the Baptist's disciples**, not the Pharisees, showing that even those preparing the way for Christ were still entrenched in the **framework of the Law**. Fasting was a mark of **devotion and mourning** in Jewish tradition, especially associated with **repentance** and **the expectation of Messiah**.

Jesus replies with a threefold answer:

1. A **wedding** analogy (v. 15)

2. A **cloth and garment** parable (v. 16)
3. A **wineskin** parable (v. 17)

Together, they present a unified message: **something new has arrived**, and the old cannot contain it.

### 3. The Illustration: Cloth, Patch, and Tear

#### A. The New Patch

The “new cloth” is:

- Unshrunk
- Not yet aged
- Full of tensile strength

#### B. The Old Garment

The “old garment” is:

- Worn out
- Fragile
- Already torn

#### C. The Result of Combining Them

When a new patch is sewn onto an old garment:

- As the new cloth shrinks, it **pulls away**
- The existing tear becomes **worse**
- The attempt to **repair** ends in **greater damage**

Jesus states that no wise person would ever attempt this—it’s common sense. But spiritually, the religious leaders were doing **exactly that**—trying to **attach the grace and power of Jesus onto the old law-based system** of Judaism.

### 4. The Old Garment: Mosaic Judaism

The old garment represents the **old covenant**—the system of Mosaic law:

- Sacrifices
- Temple worship
- Ceremonial ordinances
- Rabbinic traditions layered upon the Torah

This was a system that:

- Could reveal sin, but **not remove it** (Hebrews 10:1–4)
- Could cleanse outwardly, but **not change the heart** (Hebrews 9:10)
- Pointed forward to Christ, but was **never meant to be permanent** (Galatians 3:24)

Though **ordained by God**, it was always **temporary** and **inferior** to the covenant Christ would bring.

## 5. The New Patch: Grace and the New Covenant

The new cloth represents the **new covenant**:

- Salvation by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8–9)
- Internal transformation by the Holy Spirit
- Direct access to God through Christ
- A better hope, priesthood, and promise (Hebrews 8:6)

Jesus didn't come to **improve** Judaism. He came to **fulfill** the Law and **establish a new covenant**.

“For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17)

## 6. Doctrinal Meaning: Law and Grace Cannot Coexist

This parable teaches the **incompatibility of grace with legalism**. Mixing the two will not produce balance—it will **cause destruction**.

Paul echoed this in **Galatians**, where Judaizers tried to combine grace with the law:

- Circumcision plus Christ
- Works plus faith

- Moses plus Messiah

Paul declared:

*“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.”*

(Galatians 5:4)

The Law and the Gospel are **not teammates**. They serve **different purposes** and belong to **different covenants**.

## 7. The Parable and the Book of Hebrews

The epistle to the Hebrews serves as a detailed commentary on this parable. It declares that:

- The old covenant is **obsolete** (Hebrews 8:13)
- The Levitical priesthood is **replaced** by Melchizedek’s order (Hebrews 7:12)
- The new covenant is **superior** and **eternal** (Hebrews 9:15)

Trying to keep parts of the Law while embracing Christ is like sewing a new patch onto an old garment—it’s religious confusion and spiritual disaster.

## 8. Prophetic Insight: Transition in God’s Program

### A. From Israel to the Church

This parable illustrates the **dispensational shift**:

- From a **Jewish nation under the law**
- To a **multiethnic body of believers under grace**

The Law served as a **shadow** (Colossians 2:17), but Christ is the **substance**. When He came, the shadow passed.

### B. From Temple to the Body

Under the old covenant:

- Worship happened in the temple
- Priests mediated for the people

Under the new:

- Believers become the temple (1 Corinthians 6:19)
- Jesus is our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14)

There can be **no blending** of the two systems.

## **9. Spiritual Application**

### **A. Don't Try to Patch Grace onto Legalism**

Many believers today still attempt to:

- Add Sabbath-keeping to salvation
- Require Old Testament dietary laws
- Bind themselves to feasts and ceremonies

While these may be respected for history or study, they **cannot sanctify** or **save**. Only Christ can.

### **B. Christianity Is Not an Add-on**

Jesus is not a patch for your life. He is not meant to be:

- Added to your career
- Sewn into your traditions
- Placed beside your old beliefs

He came to **make all things new** (2 Corinthians 5:17). You must die to the old to live in the new.

### **C. Beware of Syncretism**

Trying to blend Christianity with:

- Cultural rituals
- New Age spirituality
- Legalistic traditions

...is like sewing a new patch onto a threadbare garment. The result is **spiritual destruction**, not renewal.

## 10. Parallels in Scripture

Passage	Connection
Luke 5:36–39	Same parable with added insight about old vs. new wine
Galatians 3:24–25	The law was our schoolmaster until Christ
Colossians 2:16–17	Feasts and sabbaths are shadows; Christ is the body
Romans 10:4	“Christ is the end of the law for righteousness...”
Hebrews 8:13	“That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away”

## 11. Cross-References in the KJV

- **2 Corinthians 3:6** – “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”
- **Ephesians 2:15** – “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity... the law of commandments...”
- **Romans 6:14** – “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”
- **John 1:17** – “Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
- **Philippians 3:9** – “Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law...”

## 12. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **fulfillment of the Law** (Matthew 5:17)
- The **bringer of grace and truth** (John 1:14)
- The **mediator of the new covenant** (Hebrews 9:15)
- The **garment of righteousness** we must wear (Isaiah 61:10)

He doesn't repair the old man. He crucifies him—and **raises a new man in His place** (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20).

### 13. Why the Patch Makes It Worse

Trying to add Christ to the law:

- **Cheapens grace**
- **Frustrates the Gospel** (Galatians 2:21)
- **Brings a greater judgment** (Hebrews 10:29)

Because you cannot mix:

- **Life and death**
- **Spirit and flesh**
- **Freedom and bondage**

When you try, the rent is **made worse**—the damage becomes **irreparable**.

### Conclusion

*The Parable of the New Cloth on an Old Garment* is more than a tailoring tip—it is a declaration of the **death of the old covenant** and the **birth of the new**. Jesus Christ did not come to **mend Moses**, but to **fulfill the Law and usher in grace**.

**Doctrinally**, the parable separates the covenants and condemns attempts to merge them. **Dispensationally**, it signals the transition from Israel under law to the Church under grace. **Spiritually**, it calls each of us to discard our old rags and be **clothed in the righteousness of Christ**.

You cannot wear both covenants.

You cannot sew Christ into your self-made religion.

You must **put off the old man**...

And be **clothed with Christ**.

### **34 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the New Wine in Old Bottles**

*Matthew 9:17*

**Focus: Necessity of a new vessel for new doctrine (Church vs. Israel)**

## Introduction

In *Matthew 9:17*, Jesus delivers a brief yet explosive parable about **new wine and old bottles**, which—like its companion parable of the new cloth on an old garment—addresses a fundamental issue at the heart of His earthly ministry: the incompatibility between **old covenant structures** and **new covenant truth**.

Spoken in the context of a question about **fasting and tradition**, this parable answers more than just a surface inquiry about spiritual disciplines. It confronts the deeper reality that **God was introducing a new spiritual economy**—one that could not be contained within the existing religious framework of Judaism.

This parable, though only a single verse, unveils one of the most pivotal dispensational truths in the New Testament: that **God’s new wine of grace and Spirit could not be poured into the old bottle of Mosaic religion**. A new structure was required—the **Church**, a mystery previously hidden but now revealed in Christ.

Let us now explore this parable in its full doctrinal, spiritual, and prophetic depth.

### 1. The Text of the Parable

*“Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish:*

*but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”*

(Matthew 9:17)

Parallel versions appear in:

- *Mark 2:22*
- *Luke 5:37–38*

Luke’s version adds:

*“And no man having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.”*

(Luke 5:39)

This addition reveals the human tendency to cling to **familiar systems**, even when God is doing a new thing.

## 2. The Background: A Challenge About Fasting

The parable is part of Jesus' response to this question:

*“Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?”*

(Matthew 9:14)

This was not a hostile accusation, but a **genuine concern**—especially from the disciples of John the Baptist, who practiced frequent fasting in preparation for the Messiah.

But Jesus doesn't merely answer their ritual concern. He lifts the curtain on **a shift in dispensational program**. He had not come to **renovate** Judaism—but to **replace it** with something entirely new.

This is why He responds with **three parables**:

1. **The Bridegroom and Wedding Guests** (v. 15)
2. **The New Cloth on an Old Garment** (v. 16)
3. **The New Wine in Old Bottles** (v. 17)

Each illustrates the same truth: the **new work God is doing** through Christ cannot be squeezed into the old system of the law.

## 3. The Imagery: Wine and Wineskins

### A. New Wine

New wine refers to:

- Freshly fermented wine
- Still expanding, full of life and movement

It symbolizes:

- **The new covenant of grace**
- **The Holy Spirit** (Ephesians 5:18)
- **Christ's new teachings and ministry**

### B. Old Bottles

In Jesus' day, “bottles” were not glass containers, but **goatskins** used to store wine. Over time, these skins would:

- Harden
- Lose elasticity
- Become brittle

Trying to pour new wine into these old bottles would be disastrous:

- The wine expands as it ferments
- The old skins can't stretch
- The bottles burst, and the wine is lost

#### **4. The Message: Incompatibility Between Law and Grace**

Jesus' parable illustrates a clear spiritual principle:

**You cannot pour the Gospel of grace into the framework of Mosaic law.**

The old system is inflexible, brittle, and unable to contain the dynamic power of the Spirit-filled, grace-saturated new covenant.

To force new wine into old bottles would:

- **Corrupt both**
- **Damage the message**
- **Destroy the structure**

#### **5. Doctrinal Meaning: Church and Israel Are Not the Same**

This parable speaks directly to the **dispensational distinction** between Israel and the Church.

##### **A. Israel Under the Law**

- Governed by the Mosaic covenant
- Dependent on temple rituals, feasts, sacrifices
- Earthly promises, national identity, and physical ordinances

##### **B. The Church Under Grace**

- Indwelt by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 6:19)

- Built on the finished work of Christ (Ephesians 2:20)
- Composed of Jews and Gentiles as one body (Ephesians 3:6)

The Church is the **new vessel** that holds the **new wine**.

This is why Paul says:

*“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...”* (2 Corinthians 5:17)

## 6. The Danger of Mixing Systems

Trying to combine law and grace—like putting new wine in old bottles—leads to:

- Confusion
- Spiritual exhaustion
- False doctrine

Paul fought this in Galatia, where Judaizers tried to enforce circumcision, sabbaths, and dietary laws on Gentile believers.

He warned:

*“Ye are fallen from grace.”* (Galatians 5:4)

Modern versions of this error include:

- Legalistic Christianity
- Hebrew Roots Movement
- Efforts to return to Torah as binding for the Church

## 7. The Preservation of Both

*“...they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.”* (Matthew 9:17)

In the new structure—**the Church**—the wine and the bottle are **harmonized**:

- The dynamic power of the Gospel is contained within a flexible, Spirit-led community
- Believers walk in **grace**, not by **law**
- The new wine of doctrine flows through **regenerated hearts**, not religious structures

This is why Jesus said in John 4:21:

*“The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father... true worshippers shall worship in spirit and in truth.”*

## **8. Prophetic Implication: The Death of the Old, the Birth of the New**

This parable anticipates:

- The **rejection of Christ by Israel**
- The **destruction of the temple in 70 AD**
- The **birth of the Church at Pentecost**

God removed the old structure:

*“He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.”* (Hebrews 10:9)

The temple system became obsolete (Hebrews 8:13), and God began building **a new temple**—not with stones, but with **living believers** (1 Peter 2:5).

## **9. Luke’s Addition: Human Resistance to Change**

Luke 5:39 adds:

*“No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better.”*

This speaks to the **natural human resistance** to change—especially in spiritual matters.

The Jews preferred:

- Moses to Messiah
- Temple ritual to internal righteousness
- Law to grace

Even today, many cling to the **comfort of tradition** rather than embrace the **freedom of the Spirit**.

## **10. Spiritual Applications**

## **A. Don't Live Under Law When Grace Has Come**

You are not justified by keeping commandments, but by:

- **Faith in Christ alone**
- **Walking in the Spirit** (Galatians 5:16)
- **Resting in His finished work**

## **B. Don't Force Christ Into Your Old Life**

Christ is not an **addition** to your schedule. He is not a patch or a poured-in supplement.

He is the **cornerstone** of a new creation. You must be **born again**, not reformed.

## **C. New Wine Demands New Living**

If you've received the new wine of the Spirit:

- Walk in holiness
- Live in joy
- Don't return to dead traditions

Galatians 5:1 says:

*“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free...”*

## **11. The Wineskin of the Church**

The Church is the **vessel God designed** for the Gospel:

- Not a nation, but a body
- Not bound to a temple, but indwelt by God
- Not law-based, but grace-based

It is flexible, alive, and led by the Holy Spirit.

The book of Acts shows how the early Church:

- Abandoned ritual sacrifices
- Preached to Gentiles
- Met in homes, not temples

They didn't try to patch up Judaism. They were **filled with new wine** and **became a new bottle**.

## 12. KJV Cross-References

- **2 Corinthians 3:6** – “The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”
- **Romans 7:6** – “Delivered from the law... serve in newness of spirit”
- **Hebrews 8:13** – “That which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.”
- **John 1:17** – “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
- **Ephesians 2:15** – “Having abolished... the law of commandments”

## 13. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **new wine**—alive, fermenting, expanding, transforming
- The **bringer of the new covenant**
- The **builder of the Church**
- The one who said, “Behold, I make all things new.” (Revelation 21:5)

He cannot be contained in **religion, ritual, or legalism**. He fills and transforms those who are **new vessels**.

## Conclusion

*The Parable of the New Wine in Old Bottles* is more than a commentary on fermentation—it is a bold declaration of **grace over law, Spirit over ceremony, and Christ over religion**.

**Doctrinally**, it announces the **end of Mosaic Judaism** and the rise of the **Church Age**.

**Dispensationally**, it explains why the old structure could not house the new power.

**Spiritually**, it challenges us to live as **new vessels**, filled with the **life of Christ**, refusing to return to the brittle, broken forms of our past.

New wine belongs in new bottles.

You can't mix grace with law.

You can't mix life with death.

You can't mix Christ with religion.

You must be **made new**.

## **35 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Empty House**

*Matthew 12:43–45*

**Focus: Israel's spiritual condition worsens after rejecting Christ**

### **Introduction**

Among the most haunting and prophetic of Jesus' parables is *The Parable of the Empty House*, found in *Matthew 12:43–45*. Unlike some of Jesus' more well-known parables that center on agricultural metaphors, weddings, or stewardship, this one plunges into the **unseen world of spirits**, spiritual vacancy, and the danger of religious reformation without regeneration.

At first glance, the parable seems mysterious—describing an “unclean spirit” wandering, returning, and inhabiting a house with seven others more wicked than itself. But Jesus immediately applies it:

*“Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”* (Matthew 12:45)

This links the parable directly to **the nation of Israel**, specifically to its religious leaders and the spiritual condition of the people **after rejecting their Messiah**. What Jesus describes is not merely demonic influence but **national apostasy**—a spiritual vacuum that invites judgment far worse than the original state.

Let us now explore the doctrinal, dispensational, prophetic, and personal implications of this unique and sobering parable.

### **1. The Text of the Parable**

*“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.*

Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.\* Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.\* Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”\* (Matthew 12:43–45)

## 2. The Context: Rejection of Jesus by Israel’s Leaders

Jesus had just cast out a demon from a man who was blind and mute (Matthew 12:22). The crowd was amazed, but the Pharisees said:

*“This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.”* (Matthew 12:24)

This slanderous accusation led Jesus to confront their blasphemy and expose their hypocrisy. He warned them about attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan—a sin rooted in **willful rejection**, not ignorance.

Immediately after rebuking them, Jesus tells this parable. It’s not about a random demoniac. It’s about the **spiritual state of a people who have rejected the One who came to cleanse them.**

## 3. The Parable's Imagery: A Spirit, a House, and a Return

### A. The Unclean Spirit Departs

*“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man...”*

This departure suggests an initial **spiritual reformation**—the man (or in this case, **Israel**) experiences **temporary cleansing**.

This aligns with Israel’s post-exilic history:

- After the Babylonian captivity, Israel **abandoned idolatry**
- Synagogues, scribes, and Pharisees emerged to uphold Scripture
- They were **morally reformed**, but not spiritually reborn

### B. The Spirit’s Wandering

*“...walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none...”*

Dry places symbolize **spiritual barrenness**. The demon is **displaced**, but not **destroyed**. He remains active, looking for an opportunity to return.

### **C. The Spirit Returns to “My House”**

*“I will return into my house from whence I came out...”*

The demon still claims **ownership**. The house (symbolic of the person or nation) has:

- No new resident (Holy Spirit)
- No spiritual protection
- No real transformation

It is:

- **Empty** – no presence of God
- **Swept** – cleaned up behaviorally
- **Garnished** – dressed up externally

This is a picture of **religious reformation without regeneration**.

### **4. The Invasion: Seven Spirits More Wicked**

*“...he taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself...”*

Seven is the number of **completion**. This suggests **total demonic takeover**. The final condition is:

- **More evil**
- **More hardened**
- **More resistant to truth**

The house, once cleansed, is now fully defiled.

This aligns with what Jesus says:

*“And the last state of that man is worse than the first.”*

### **5. The Application: “So Shall It Be With This Wicked Generation”**

Here, Jesus makes the **national application** crystal clear.

## **A. The Man Represents Israel**

The “house” is not just an individual, but the **corporate condition of Israel**—especially the generation that:

- Saw Jesus’ miracles
- Heard His preaching
- Witnessed His authority

And yet... **rejected Him**.

## **B. The Warning**

Their rejection would not leave them spiritually neutral. Instead:

- Their “empty house” would be invaded by worse spirits
- Their religious hypocrisy would grow
- Their condemnation would deepen

This finds ultimate fulfillment in:

- The national rejection of Christ
- The crucifixion
- The coming destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

## **6. Prophetic Insight: National Apostasy and Judgment**

This parable previews **Israel’s downward spiral** after rejecting their Messiah.

### **A. The First Cleansing**

Israel was cleansed of idolatry after Babylon, as seen in:

- Nehemiah’s reforms
- The rise of the scribes and Pharisees
- A legalistic focus on Torah

But it was **external**, not internal. They were swept and garnished—but **still empty**.

### **B. The Final Rejection**

By rejecting Jesus, Israel:

- Resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51)
- Called evil good and good evil
- Invited demonic influence back into the “house”

### **C. The Final State**

By A.D. 70, Israel was:

- In full apostasy
- Without temple, sacrifice, or priesthood
- Scattered among the nations

Their last state was **far worse than their first**.

## **7. Spiritual Application: Reformation vs. Regeneration**

This parable also applies to individuals who:

- Try to “clean up their lives”
- Reform behavior
- Leave bad habits

...but never receive Christ. They are moral, even religious—but **still empty**.

### **A. Reformation Without Regeneration**

The dangers of reformation without the Holy Spirit:

- Pride in morality
- False assurance
- A clean vessel that attracts worse bondage

2 Peter 2:20–22 warns:

*“The latter end is worse with them than the beginning.”*

### **B. The Need for a New Resident**

It’s not enough to be cleaned up. The **Holy Spirit must take residence**.

*“Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost...?”* (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Only salvation through Christ brings lasting deliverance.

## 8. Cross-References in the KJV

- **Matthew 23:27** – “Whited sepulchres... full of dead men’s bones.”
- **2 Timothy 3:5** – “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof...”
- **Luke 11:24–26** – Parallel account of this parable
- **Acts 7:51** – “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost...”
- **Hebrews 10:26–31** – Greater judgment after knowing the truth and rejecting it

## 9. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **Cleaner** of the house
- The **One Israel rejected**
- The **True occupant** who must take residence
- The **Judge** of every generation

He warns that rejecting Him is not just a missed opportunity—it’s an invitation to greater darkness.

## 10. Modern Warnings

This parable serves as a warning to:

- Churches that are moral but unconverted
- Nations that once embraced truth but now reject it
- Individuals who clean up but never surrender

A person can:

- Leave addiction

- Join religion
- Adopt morality

...but without Christ, their house is **still empty**.

## 11. God's Solution: Fill the House with His Spirit

The answer is not **moralism**, but **indwelling**.

Jesus does not want you to:

- Polish your old life
- Garnish your habits
- Maintain an empty religion

He wants to **move in**, transform, and own the house.

*"Behold, I stand at the door and knock..."* (Revelation 3:20)

When He is inside, no demon can return.

## 12. The Structure of Judgment

This parable teaches us a divine pattern:

1. **Deliverance** (unclean spirit leaves)
2. **Opportunity** (house is swept)
3. **Neglect** (left empty)
4. **Return** (demon finds entrance)
5. **Worse Condition** (complete takeover)
6. **Final Judgment** (state worse than beginning)

It follows what Jesus said:

*"To whom much is given, of him shall be much required."* (Luke 12:48)

## 13. The Role of False Religion

False religion:

- Sweeps and garnishes the house
- Provides ceremony, not salvation
- Has form, but no power

Israel had:

- Pharisees
- Priests
- Scripture

...but no Spirit. And thus, no safety.

The same is true today in:

- Dead denominations
- Legalistic movements
- Humanistic Christianity

Without Christ, it's just a clean shell waiting to collapse.

#### **14. A Personal Reflection**

Ask yourself:

- Am I reformed or regenerated?
- Has Christ entered my heart—or am I just religious?
- Am I filled with His Spirit, or just morally empty?

#### **Conclusion**

*The Parable of the Empty House* is a terrifying warning not only for Israel, but for all who flirt with the idea of **external change** without **internal conversion**. It reminds us that **vacant souls are vulnerable souls**—and that Christ alone must fill the house.

**Doctrinally**, it exposes the downward spiral of a nation that rejects its Redeemer.

**Prophetically**, it previews the destruction of Israel and their last-day condition before

repentance.

**Spiritually**, it warns each of us not to be content with clean habits and religious polish—but to make sure Jesus truly resides within.

The house may look clean, but is it filled?

Because if Christ is not inside,  
the enemy is coming back—and he’s not coming alone.

## **36 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Net**

*Matthew 13:47–50*

**Focus: Final judgment and separation at the end of the age**

### **Introduction**

As Jesus neared the end of His parabolic discourse in Matthew 13—often referred to as the **Kingdom Parables**—He delivered one of the most sobering and eschatologically focused teachings: *The Parable of the Net*. Like the Parable of the Wheat and Tares, this parable unveils the **future separation between the righteous and the wicked**, but it does so with unique imagery drawn from the world of fishing.

In this parable, Jesus describes a **net cast into the sea**, gathering every kind of fish. Once full, it is drawn to shore, and the fishermen sort the good from the bad. The meaning is not left to speculation—Jesus gives a **clear interpretation**, pointing directly to the **end of the world**, the **angels**, and the **fiery judgment** awaiting the wicked.

This parable strikes at the core of **human destiny**, divine justice, and eternal consequence. It also reflects the **broad scope of the Kingdom Age**, drawing in all kinds—yet ending in **divine discernment**. Let us now explore this powerful teaching in full.

### **1. The Text of the Parable**

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:*

*Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.*

*So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,*

*And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”*  
(Matthew 13:47–50)

## **2. The Setting: A Series of “Kingdom of Heaven” Parables**

Matthew 13 contains **seven parables** about the “mystery form” of the Kingdom of Heaven during the time when the King (Jesus) is rejected. These parables were:

1. The Sower
2. The Wheat and Tares
3. The Mustard Seed
4. The Leaven
5. The Hidden Treasure
6. The Pearl of Great Price
7. **The Net**

The Parable of the Net is the **final parable** in the main sequence and serves as a climactic warning. Jesus follows it with a brief parable of the householder (Matthew 13:52), but that serves more as a summary for the disciples.

## **3. The Imagery: A Net, the Sea, and the Sorting**

### **A. The Net**

The word used here is *sagēnē*—a large **dragnet**, not a hook-and-line method. This net:

- Covers a wide area
- Catches **every kind** of fish
- Is **drawn indiscriminately** through the water

This is **not a selective tool**. It speaks to the **broad outreach of the Kingdom message**.

### **B. The Sea**

Biblically, the **sea often represents the nations**:

- *Revelation 17:15* – “peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues”

- *Daniel 7:2–3* – beasts arise from the sea (Gentile empires)

The sea here represents the **world**—the **vast ocean of humanity**.

### **C. The Fish**

*“...gathered of every kind...”*

The fish represent **people**—all kinds, without distinction:

- Jew and Gentile
- Religious and irreligious
- Moral and immoral

This is the **gathering nature of the Gospel**, which goes out to “whosoever will.”

## **4. The Process: From Casting to Sorting**

### **A. The Net Is Cast**

This represents the **preaching of the Word**—God’s truth going forth in the Church Age and Tribulation.

### **B. It Gathers Every Kind**

This pictures:

- A **visible church** composed of both true and false converts
- A **Kingdom mixture** of real and counterfeit
- The **invisible reality** that will one day be revealed

### **C. The Net Becomes Full**

There is a time when the **gathering stops**—the end of God’s longsuffering. This is the **end of the age**.

### **D. The Sorting Begins**

*“...they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.”*

This is the **moment of judgment**. The fish are **not judged by appearances**, but by **quality**—a sovereign evaluation.

## 5. Jesus' Interpretation: Final Judgment

*"So shall it be at the end of the world..."*

(Matthew 13:49)

Jesus interprets the parable clearly—this is not just a teaching about fish or evangelism. It is about:

- The **consummation of the age**
- The **visible return of Christ**
- The **separation of mankind**

### A. The Angels Are the Agents

*"...the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just..."*

This parallels:

- *Matthew 24:31* – Angels gather the elect
- *Matthew 25:31–46* – Sheep and goats separated
- *Revelation 14:15–20* – Angels harvest the earth

### B. The Wicked Are Severed

This is a **reverse order**—the wicked are removed **first**, just as in the **wheat and tares** parable (Matthew 13:41–42).

There is:

- No second chance
- No appeal
- No confusion

### C. Furnace of Fire: Eternal Judgment

*"And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."*

(Matthew 13:50)

This is a **terrifying, literal reality**:

- Not symbolic

- Not temporary
- Not figurative annihilation

This is **hell**, described in multiple passages:

- *Mark 9:43–48* – unquenchable fire
- *Revelation 20:14–15* – lake of fire
- *2 Thessalonians 1:8–9* – everlasting destruction

## 6. Doctrinal Meaning: Judgment at the End of the Age

### A. Not the Rapture

This judgment is not the **rapture**, where believers are taken **before** wrath falls (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17). It is the **judgment at Christ's Second Coming**, after the Tribulation.

### B. Not Church Discipline

This is not a reference to **sorting out heresy** within the Church by pastors or councils. This is **final, divine separation**.

### C. Separation of the Wicked from the Just

The key distinction is **righteousness**, not:

- Church attendance
- Good deeds
- Religious identity

Only those **truly justified by faith** in Christ are preserved.

## 7. Prophetic Implication: Tribulation and Second Coming

This parable fits the prophetic pattern:

1. **Church Age** – The Gospel is cast as a net into the sea of humanity.
2. **Tribulation** – Final Gospel proclamation (Revelation 14:6).
3. **Second Advent** – Christ returns in power (Matthew 24:29–30).

4. **Angelic Harvest** – Wicked are removed (Matthew 13:49).
5. **Millennial Reign Begins** – The Kingdom is established.

## 8. Spiritual Application

### A. Everyone Is Caught in the Net

The Gospel touches **everyone in some form**—through preaching, testimony, Scripture, or creation. You are in the net.

### B. Not All Who Are Caught Are Saved

Many **look like fish** but are unclean:

- False professors (Matthew 7:21)
- Moral but lost
- Religious but dead

### C. True Salvation Shows Itself in Transformation

The good fish are **fit for use**, useful to the Master. Salvation is **not perfection**, but **regeneration** (Titus 3:5).

### D. Judgment Is Final and Irrevocable

Jesus leaves no room for purgatory, reincarnation, or second chances. Once sorted, the destination is eternal:

- **With Christ in the Kingdom**
- **Or in the furnace of fire**

## 9. The Comfort of the Righteous

While the parable is fearsome for the wicked, it is **hopeful for the righteous**. There is coming a time when:

- Evil will be removed
- Righteousness will reign
- Justice will be seen

Psalm 37:34–38 speaks of the final end of the wicked and the peace of the righteous.

## 10. KJV Cross-References

- **Matthew 3:12** – “He will thoroughly purge his floor... gather wheat into the garner... burn up the chaff”
- **Matthew 13:41–42** – “Cast them into a furnace of fire”
- **Ecclesiastes 12:14** – “God shall bring every work into judgment...”
- **2 Peter 3:7** – “The day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men”
- **Revelation 20:12–15** – “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life...”

## 11. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **One who casts the net**
- The **One who interprets the catch**
- The **Coming King who sends His angels**
- The **Judge who determines every soul’s eternity**

He is not indifferent or unclear. He **warns, pleads,** and finally **judges.**

## 12. Why This Parable Still Matters Today

In a world of:

- **Compromise**
- **False unity**
- **Moral relativism**

This parable cuts through the noise. It reminds us:

- Truth matters
- Judgment is coming

- Not all “fish” are the same

We must not rest in **external appearances**, but seek the inner transformation only **Christ can bring**.

## **Conclusion**

*The Parable of the Net* is not just about fishing—it’s about **eternal sorting, final justice,** and **spiritual reality**. It tells us:

- The Gospel reaches all
- Only the righteous are saved
- The wicked will face eternal separation

**Doctrinally**, it explains the end-of-age judgment.

**Prophetically**, it places us near the close of the age.

**Spiritually**, it calls us to examine ourselves and preach the Gospel while the net is still being drawn.

Because once the net is full...

The sorting begins.

## **37 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Pounds**

*Luke 19:11–27*

**Focus: Responsibility and reward; comparison with the talents parable**

### **Introduction**

Jesus delivered *The Parable of the Pounds* (also called the Parable of the Minas) in the city of Jericho, just before His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. The timing is crucial. The crowd following Him “thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear” (Luke 19:11). They anticipated the political establishment of the Messianic Kingdom. But Jesus corrected this assumption with a story that was both **prophetic** and **practical**, explaining the delay between His first and second comings, and the expectation of faithful stewardship during His absence.

Though this parable shares similarities with the *Parable of the Talents* (Matthew 25:14–30), it carries distinct details, audience intent, and prophetic emphasis. While the Parable of the Talents emphasizes **varying ability**, the Parable of the Pounds stresses **equal opportunity and differing response**.

Let's now walk verse by verse through the parable, examining its doctrinal insights, prophetic timeline, and spiritual lessons for every believer living in the interim between the King's departure and His return.

## 1. The Context: Misunderstood Expectations

*“And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.”*  
(Luke 19:11)

The disciples expected Jesus to:

- Overthrow Roman rule
- Reign from David's throne
- Restore national Israel

But Jesus spoke this parable to:

- Delay that expectation
- Explain His coming departure
- Emphasize **faithfulness during the delay**

## 2. The Parable Begins: A Nobleman Goes to a Far Country

*“A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.”*  
(Luke 19:12)

### A. The Nobleman: Jesus Christ

This “certain nobleman” clearly represents **Christ Himself**, who:

- Descends from heaven (Luke 1:32–33)
- Is of royal lineage

- Will receive **kingdom authority from the Father** (Daniel 7:13–14)

This reflects the real-life political custom of the time, where noblemen went to Rome to receive official approval to rule (as Herod Archelaus did). Jesus is using a cultural reference to illustrate a **spiritual and prophetic truth**.

## **B. The Far Country: Heaven**

Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection (Acts 1:9–11), where He now awaits the time to return and establish His literal Kingdom on earth.

## **3. The Commission: Ten Servants and Ten Pounds**

*“And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.”*

(Luke 19:13)

### **A. Equal Entrustment**

Each of the ten servants receives **one pound** (a *mina*, worth about 3 months’ wages). This differs from the talents parable, where distribution is **according to ability**.

The emphasis here is **equal opportunity** and **individual accountability**.

### **B. “Occupy till I come”**

The nobleman’s command is one of **ongoing activity**, not passive waiting:

- “Do business”
- “Engage in faithful stewardship”
- “Use what I’ve given you until I return”

It’s a call to live with **urgency**, **responsibility**, and **watchfulness** during the King's absence.

## **4. The Rebellion: Citizens Who Hated Him**

*“But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.”*

(Luke 19:14)

This verse introduces a second group: **the citizens**, distinct from the servants. They represent **unbelieving Israel**, and by extension, the unbelieving world.

## A. Rejection of the King

This is a clear reference to the national rejection of Christ (John 1:11), culminating in the cross:

*“We have no king but Caesar.”* (John 19:15)

It foreshadows:

- Continued rejection throughout the Church Age
- The ultimate judgment of Christ-rejecting nations at His return (Psalm 2; Revelation 19)

## 5. The Accounting: The Nobleman Returns

*“And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom...”*  
(Luke 19:15)

Jesus jumps to the **Second Coming**, when He returns in glory:

- As King of kings (Revelation 19:11–16)
- To judge both the faithful and the wicked
- To reward His servants (2 Corinthians 5:10)

## 6. The First Servant: Ten Pounds Gained

*“...Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.”*  
(Luke 19:16)

This servant **multiplied the investment tenfold**—a remarkable return.

### A. The Commendation

*“Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.”* (Luke 19:17)

Note:

- The reward is **proportional** to faithfulness
- It involves **shared rulership** in the Kingdom (cf. Revelation 2:26; 3:21)

Jesus is teaching that **faithfulness now results in authority later**.

## 7. The Second Servant: Five Pounds Gained

*"...thy pound hath gained five pounds."*

(Luke 19:18)

This servant also receives **commendation**, though the reward is smaller:

*"Be thou also over five cities."* (Luke 19:19)

The principle:

**God rewards based on what you do with what you've been given**, not in comparison to others.

## 8. The Third Servant: No Gain

*"...behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin..."*

(Luke 19:20)

This servant represents the **professing but unproductive follower**. He did nothing wrong—he simply **did nothing**.

### A. His Excuse

*"...I feared thee, because thou art an austere man..."*

(Luke 19:21)

He blames the master's character—implying:

- Harshness
- Unreasonableness
- Fear, not faith

This shows a **distorted view of God**, common among the spiritually indifferent.

### B. The Rebuke

*"Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee..."*

(Luke 19:22)

The nobleman doesn't accept the excuse but uses it against him. If he truly believed the master was stern, he should have at least **put the money to use with the bankers**.

### **9. The Verdict: Loss of Reward**

*"Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds."*

(Luke 19:24)

This echoes the principle:

*"Unto every one which hath shall be given..."*

(Luke 19:26)

Faithfulness brings more responsibility. Faithlessness brings loss.

While this servant is **not condemned like the citizens**, he suffers **loss of reward** (1 Corinthians 3:15).

### **10. The Enemies: Slain Before the King**

*"But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."*

(Luke 19:27)

This is **judgment** on the rebellious "citizens"—those who rejected His reign.

#### **A. Final Judgment**

This represents the:

- Judgment of nations (Matthew 25:31–46)
- Destruction at Armageddon (Revelation 19)
- Casting of the wicked into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15)

Jesus doesn't mince words. His **grace is real**, but so is His **judgment**.

### **11. Comparison: Talents vs. Pounds**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25)</b>	<b>Parable of the Pounds (Luke 19)</b>
<b>Servants</b>	3 servants	10 servants (3 highlighted)
<b>Gifts</b>	Unequal (according to ability)	Equal (1 pound each)
<b>Focus</b>	Ability and stewardship	Faithfulness with equal opportunity
<b>Reward</b>	Entering into joy, not cities	Authority over cities
<b>Rebuke</b>	Wicked, slothful, cast into outer darkness	Pound taken, not slain
<b>Judgment</b>	Not emphasized	Enemies slain

Together, they teach:

- **Faithfulness in all things**
- **Varying levels of reward**
- **A real Kingdom with positions of rulership**

## **12. Doctrinal and Prophetic Applications**

### **A. Church Age Stewardship**

We live in the “occupy till I come” phase. Believers are entrusted with:

- The Gospel (1 Thessalonians 2:4)
- Spiritual gifts (Romans 12; 1 Corinthians 12)
- Opportunities, influence, and resources

### **B. Bema Seat Judgment**

This parable looks forward to the **Judgment Seat of Christ**, where:

- Rewards are distributed
- Faithfulness is evaluated
- Every believer gives account (Romans 14:10; 2 Corinthians 5:10)

### **C. Millennial Kingdom**

The reward is **governmental authority** in the Millennium:

- Ruling with Christ (Revelation 5:10; 20:6)
- Faithfulness here determines responsibility there

### 13. Spiritual Lessons

#### A. Everyone Has a Pound

You may not have much, but you **have something**. God gave it to you:

- Time
- Gospel knowledge
- Resources
- Relationships

#### B. Excuses Don't Justify Inaction

Fear, comparison, or self-doubt won't excuse failure to serve. The Lord expects fruitfulness—even if only by simple faithfulness.

#### C. Christ's Return Is Certain

The nobleman **will return**. The world may deny it, but **He is coming** (Acts 1:11).

#### D. Rewards Are Real

Jesus promises **eternal rewards** based on how we use our opportunities now.

### 14. KJV Cross-References

- **1 Corinthians 3:13–15** – “Every man's work shall be made manifest...”
- **Romans 14:12** – “Every one of us shall give account...”
- **2 Timothy 2:12** – “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him...”
- **Hebrews 10:35** – “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.”
- **Revelation 3:21** – “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne...”

### 15. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **nobleman** going to receive His Kingdom
- The **discerner of hearts**
- The **rewarder of the faithful**
- The **judge of the wicked**

He will not remain absent forever. He will return, with reward and reckoning.

## Conclusion

*The Parable of the Pounds* is a masterful teaching that blends **eschatology**, **accountability**, and **divine reward** into a single sweeping story. It reminds us that:

- We are **servants entrusted with divine resources**
- Christ's return is **delayed, but certain**
- **Faithfulness will be rewarded**, and **faithlessness will be rebuked**
- Rejection of Christ leads to **eternal judgment**

**Doctrinally**, the parable explains our stewardship during the Church Age.

**Prophetically**, it previews the Millennial Kingdom and coming judgment.

**Practically**, it calls every believer to take their pound seriously.

Christ is coming.

Are you occupying till He comes?

## **38 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Servant's Duty**

*Luke 17:7–10*

**Focus: Humility and doing one's duty without seeking praise**

## Introduction

One of the shortest and most piercing of Jesus' parables, *The Parable of the Servant's Duty* (Luke 17:7–10), is a sharp corrective against entitlement and spiritual pride. Unlike many of

Jesus' parables, which teach through metaphor and mystery, this one delivers a straightforward and humbling truth: **servants are not to expect reward or praise for simply doing what is required.**

This parable is deeply countercultural—not only in Jesus' day but especially in our modern age of entitlement, affirmation-seeking, and performance-based recognition. In a society that constantly seeks validation for the smallest contribution, Jesus reminds His disciples that **faithful service to God is not a favor to Him**—it is the **baseline of our calling.**

Jesus had just spoken to His disciples about forgiving others repeatedly and having even a mustard-seed amount of faith. Now He brings them back to the heart posture required in ministry: **servant-hearted humility.** Let us now examine this parable in detail and unpack its doctrinal, spiritual, and practical implications for believers today.

## 1. The Text of the Parable

*“But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle,  
will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field,  
Go and sit down to meat?  
And will not rather say unto him,  
Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me,  
till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?  
Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow  
not.  
So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say,  
We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”*  
(Luke 17:7–10)

## 2. The Context: Faith, Forgiveness, and Obedience

Prior to this parable, Jesus had instructed His disciples about:

- Repeated forgiveness (Luke 17:3–4)
- The power of mustard-seed faith (Luke 17:5–6)

The apostles, feeling overwhelmed, had asked for more faith. Jesus responded not by granting it but by reminding them of **perspective**—even with great faith or abundant forgiveness, they are still **servants of the Most High.**

Now Jesus addresses the **attitude** that should govern such faith and obedience: **humble, dutiful service without expectation of applause.**

### 3. The Illustration: A Common Servant in First-Century Israel

Jesus draws from an everyday scenario familiar to His audience—a **servant returning from the field.**

#### A. The Servant's Labor

*"...having a servant plowing or feeding cattle..."*

This servant has been working all day—either tilling the soil or caring for livestock. The work is hard, physical, and demanding.

#### B. The Master's Expectation

*"...when he is come from the field, will [the master] say... Go and sit down to meat?"*

Jesus asks rhetorically: Does the master reward the servant by **inviting him to dinner first?**

Of course not.

#### C. The Next Task: Serving the Master at Home

*"...make ready wherewith I may sup... and serve me..."*

Even after fieldwork, the servant's job is not finished. He now prepares dinner and serves his master before attending to his own needs.

### 4. The Message: No Thanks Required for Duty

*"Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not."*

(Luke 17:9)

"I trow not" means "I think not." The master does not offer praise for **routine obedience.** The servant **owes** this labor—it is **his duty.**

This is the central truth of the parable.

### 5. The Application: We Are Unprofitable Servants

*“So likewise ye...”*

(Luke 17:10)

Jesus brings the point home. The disciples, and by extension all believers, are to see themselves as **servants of the Lord**, not performers seeking praise.

*“We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.”*

This is not an excuse to do less—it is a reminder that even doing **everything required** still leaves us in a position of **debt and humility** before God.

## **6. Doctrinal Meaning: Salvation by Grace, Not Merit**

This parable reminds us that:

- No amount of service **earns** salvation
- Obedience, while necessary, does not **add credit** to our account
- Eternal life is by **grace through faith**, not **performance**

### **A. Romans 4:4–5**

*“Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt...”*

### **B. Ephesians 2:8–9**

*“For by grace are ye saved through faith... not of works...”*

Our service does not purchase favor—it is the **response** to a salvation already given freely.

## **7. The Heart of the Servant: Humility and Gratitude**

Jesus is not discouraging service—He’s shaping our **heart posture**. The danger is:

- Serving with pride
- Expecting applause
- Resenting others when unnoticed

### **A. Philippians 2:5–8**

Jesus Himself, though equal with God, **took on the form of a servant**.

If our Lord served without seeking recognition, how much more should we?

## B. 1 Corinthians 15:10

*“By the grace of God I am what I am... yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.”*

## 8. Unprofitable Servants: What Does It Mean?

*“We are unprofitable servants...”*

This doesn't mean we are worthless. It means:

- We **owe God everything**
- We never put God in our debt
- Our service adds **nothing to His worth**, but reveals **His worth to us**

It humbles us, reminding us that **God does not need us—but He invites us to serve.**

## 9. Comparing with Other Parables of Servants

Parable	Theme	Contrast with Luke 17:7–10
Faithful and Wise Servant (Matt 24:45–51)	Reward for watchfulness	Focuses on <b>future reward</b>
Talents and Pounds (Matt 25, Luke 19)	Judgment and reward	Highlights <b>diligent investment</b>
Servant's Duty (Luke 17:7–10)	Humility in duty	Focuses on <b>attitude</b> without reward

Each parable has a purpose. Luke 17 addresses the **mindset of the servant**, not his **outcome**.

## 10. Spiritual Dangers Addressed

### A. Pride in Service

- “I've done so much for God.”
- “He owes me a blessing.”

This parable says: **No, He doesn't.**

### **B. Conditional Obedience**

- “I’ll serve if I get recognition.”
- “I need appreciation or I’ll quit.”

Jesus says: **Serve because you’re a servant.**

### **C. Self-Righteousness**

This parable protects us from a **Pharisaic mindset** that boasts in works.

## **11. Encouragement for the Faithful**

Paradoxically, while the servant isn’t “thanked” in this parable, other Scriptures promise that **God will reward** the faithful.

*“Well done, thou good and faithful servant...”* (Matthew 25:21)

But this reward is **grace**, not obligation. It flows from God’s love, not our merit.

**We serve not to be saved, and not even to be praised, but because we love the One who saved us.**

## **12. Application to Ministry and Daily Life**

### **A. Ministry**

- Pastor, teacher, evangelist—don’t serve for applause.
- Don’t measure fruit by compliments.
- Serve faithfully, joyfully, and humbly.

### **B. Family Life**

- Parents who labor in obscurity—your reward is in heaven.
- Husbands and wives—serve each other without scorekeeping.

### **C. Career and Calling**

- Work heartily as unto the Lord, not for human bosses (Colossians 3:23).

### 13. KJV Cross-References

- **Romans 12:1** – “Your reasonable service”
- **1 Corinthians 4:1–2** – “Stewards... found faithful”
- **Matthew 20:27–28** – “Servant of all... the Son of man came not to be ministered unto”
- **Titus 3:5** – “Not by works of righteousness which we have done”
- **Galatians 6:9** – “Be not weary in well doing...”

### 14. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **Servant of all** (Mark 10:45)
- The **example of humility** (Philippians 2)
- The **Master we serve**
- The **One who washes feet** and teaches us to do the same (John 13)

He deserves **our service without condition, our obedience without complaint, and our humility without performance.**

### 15. Final Reflection: Joy in Duty

Duty without joy becomes drudgery. But when love fuels our service, we no longer need thanks—we already have the **Master’s approval.**

*“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus...”* (Philippians 2:5)

The goal is not recognition—but **faithfulness.**

The reward is not praise—but **fellowship with Christ.**

### Conclusion

*The Parable of the Servant’s Duty* strips away all pretense and pride. It calls us to a life of:

- **Obedient faithfulness**

- **Unwavering humility**
- **Unconditional service**

**Doctrinally**, it reminds us that we are saved by grace, not by works.

**Practically**, it challenges us to serve without self-centered motives.

**Spiritually**, it elevates the glory of Christ and crushes the ego of man.

We are unprofitable servants.

We have done that which was our duty to do.

And yet... how gracious is our Master, who still chooses to call us friends, heirs, and co-laborers in His kingdom.

### **39 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Fig Tree Budding**

*Matthew 24:32–35*

**Focus: Israel as God’s timepiece; signs of the end times**

#### **Introduction**

*The Parable of the Fig Tree Budding*, recorded in Matthew 24:32–35, is one of Jesus’ most concise, yet deeply prophetic, parables. It serves as a **key marker within the Olivet Discourse**, the greatest prophetic sermon ever delivered by Christ. Often overshadowed by the more dramatic passages in Matthew 24, this parable acts as a **prophetic timepiece**, pointing to the **nation of Israel** and **signaling the nearness of the Lord’s return**.

In it, Jesus urges His followers to observe the signs of the times, just as they would watch a fig tree for signs of approaching summer. While seemingly simple, this parable reveals layers of **prophetic precision**, **symbolic typology**, and **practical application** for discerning the end of the age.

Let us now explore this parable verse by verse, connecting it to Scripture’s broader narrative concerning Israel, the Second Coming, and our responsibility as watchful believers.

#### **1. The Text of the Parable**

*“Now learn a parable of the fig tree;  
When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:  
So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.  
Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.  
Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”*  
(Matthew 24:32–35)

## **2. The Context: The Olivet Discourse**

Jesus had just answered the disciples’ question in verse 3:

*“What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?”*

He responded with:

- Wars and rumors of wars
- Famines, pestilences, earthquakes
- The rise of false prophets
- The abomination of desolation
- Great Tribulation
- Signs in the heavens

Immediately following these declarations, Jesus gives the parable of the fig tree, calling His listeners to be **watchful and discerning**.

## **3. The Fig Tree in Biblical Symbolism**

To understand this parable, one must understand how the **fig tree symbolizes Israel** throughout Scripture.

### **A. Old Testament References**

- *Hosea 9:10* – “I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree...”
- *Jeremiah 24* – Two baskets of figs represent obedient and disobedient Jews.
- *Joel 1:6–7* – God’s land and fig tree are destroyed.

## B. Jesus' Cursing of the Fig Tree

In Matthew 21:18–20, Jesus cursed a **barren fig tree**, causing it to wither. This was not random—it was symbolic:

- The fig tree had **leaves but no fruit**—a picture of Israel's external religion but internal barrenness.
- It previewed **judgment upon the nation**, which rejected their Messiah.

## C. National Israel = Fig Tree

Throughout prophetic Scripture, the fig tree represents:

- **National identity**
- **Spiritual condition**
- **Covenantal dealings** with God

Thus, when Jesus says, *“Learn a parable of the fig tree”*, He is calling attention to **Israel's role in prophetic fulfillment**.

## 4. The Budding Fig Tree: The Rebirth of Israel

*“When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh.”*  
(Matthew 24:32)

This budding process represents **a national revival or restoration**. The fig tree was once cursed and barren (Matthew 21), but now:

- Its **branch is tender**
- It **puts forth leaves**

This imagery aligns with **the rebirth of the nation of Israel** in 1948.

### A. Israel's Rebirth in 1948

- After nearly 2,000 years in diaspora, Israel became a nation again on May 14, 1948.
- This unprecedented return was prophesied in Ezekiel 37's vision of dry bones coming to life.
- It marked the **beginning of end-time events**, just as a budding tree marks the **nearness of summer**.

## B. Prophetic “Budding” of Israel

The fig tree doesn’t bear fruit yet—but it **lives again**. That is key:

- The nation has **land, language, government, and military**.
- But the **spiritual fruit**—turning to Christ—will come **during the Tribulation**.

## 5. Summer Is Nigh: The Closeness of the End

*“...ye know that summer is nigh.”*

(Matthew 24:32)

Just as leaves signify summer, the **restoration of Israel** signifies the approach of:

- The **Tribulation**
- The **Second Coming**
- The **Day of the Lord**

Jesus is saying: *“Watch Israel. When you see her revived, know the end is near.”*

### A. The “Season” of His Return

Though we don’t know the **day or hour** (Matthew 24:36), we are told to recognize the **season**.

Paul echoes this in:

*“But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.”*

(1 Thessalonians 5:4)

## 6. “All These Things”: What Are the Signs?

*“When ye shall see all these things...”*

(Matthew 24:33)

What things?

- Wars, deception, persecution (Matthew 24:6–10)
- The abomination of desolation (v. 15)
- The Great Tribulation (v. 21)

- Cosmic disturbances (v. 29)

These are not signs of the **Rapture** (which is signless), but signs of the **Second Coming** following the **Tribulation**.

## 7. “It Is Near, Even at the Doors”

Jesus intensifies the warning:

- His return is **imminent once the signs begin**
- Like **labor pains**, they increase in frequency and intensity
- Once Israel buds, the countdown begins

## 8. “This Generation Shall Not Pass” – A Key Prophetic Statement

*“Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.”*  
(Matthew 24:34)

This statement has sparked much debate. What does “this generation” mean?

### A. Possible Interpretations

#### 1. Contemporary Generation (of Jesus’ day):

- Some argue Jesus was referring to His own generation.
- But that generation died without seeing His return.

#### 2. Jewish Race or People:

- The word “generation” (*genea*) can also mean **race or family**.
- This interpretation fits: *“The Jewish people will not pass away before all is fulfilled.”*

#### 3. The Generation That Sees the Fig Tree Bud:

- Most prophetic teachers see this as the **generation alive when Israel is reborn**.
- That generation will **not fully die out before all end-time events are completed**.

This makes the rebirth of Israel in 1948 a **major prophetic milestone**.

## 9. “Heaven and Earth Shall Pass Away...”

*“...but my words shall not pass away.”*

(Matthew 24:35)

Jesus concludes the parable with a stunning affirmation:

- The **cosmos** may dissolve
- But His **prophecies will stand**

This is a **guarantee**. The fig tree **will bud**. The Tribulation **will occur**. Christ **will return**.

## 10. Doctrinal Implications

### A. Israel Is Central to God’s Prophetic Program

- God is **not finished with Israel** (Romans 11:1–2)
- The Church has **not replaced** Israel (Romans 11:25)
- National repentance is still future (Zechariah 12:10)

### B. The Signs Are Not for the Rapture, but the Second Coming

- The Rapture is **signless and imminent** (1 Thessalonians 4:16–17)
- The Second Coming is **preceded by visible signs**, including Israel’s rebirth and Tribulation events

### C. God Keeps His Promises

The return of Israel proves that **God’s covenant with Abraham** (Genesis 17) and **David** (2 Samuel 7) stands.

## 11. Spiritual Applications

### A. Be Watchful

Jesus says, “*When ye see...*”—we must be alert. Not paranoid, but aware. Prophecy isn’t meant to create fear—but **faithfulness**.

## B. Don't Scoff at Prophetic Fulfillment

2 Peter 3 warns that scoffers will deny the Lord's return. But the fig tree parable says: *"It's happening—watch the signs."*

## C. Build on What Endures

*"Heaven and earth shall pass away..."*

Everything temporal is fading. Only God's Word endures.

## 12. Cross-References in the KJV

- **Jeremiah 24:5** – "Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them..."
- **Isaiah 66:8** – "Shall a nation be born at once?"
- **Ezekiel 36:24–28** – Israel's restoration to the land
- **Luke 21:29–31** – Parallel fig tree account
- **Romans 11:25–26** – "All Israel shall be saved..."

## 13. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **owner of the vineyard**
- The **one who cursed** the barren fig tree
- The **coming King** whose return is near
- The **Word** whose truth shall never pass away

He is both the **sign giver** and the **sign Himself** (Luke 2:34).

## 14. Modern Relevance

Israel's rebirth, technological explosion, global unrest, apostasy, and moral collapse all point to one thing:

**Summer is near.**

The budding fig tree is not mere horticulture—it is **heaven's alarm clock**.

## Conclusion

*The Parable of the Fig Tree Budding* is short in length but massive in prophetic depth. It invites us to:

- Watch God’s prophetic calendar
- Understand the role of Israel
- Live in readiness for Christ’s return

**Doctrinally**, it affirms the literal return of Christ.

**Prophetically**, it places Israel as the centerpiece of the end times.

**Personally**, it urges us to wake up and serve while there is still time.

The fig tree has budded.

The leaves are on the branch.

Summer is near.

Jesus is at the door.

“When ye shall see all these things... know that it is near, even at the doors.” (Matthew 24:33)

## **40 of 40: Parables of Jesus – The Parable of the Children in the Marketplace**

*Matthew 11:16–19; Luke 7:31–35*

**Focus: Spiritual immaturity; people’s fickle rejection of both John and Jesus**

## Introduction

With this parable, *The Parable of the Children in the Marketplace*, Jesus brings a stinging rebuke—not of tax collectors or sinners—but of the **religious generation** that consistently rejected both the **severity of John the Baptist** and the **gentleness of Christ**. He uses the image of **children sitting in the marketplace**, complaining that no one will play their games—whether joyful or sorrowful.

This is one of Jesus’ shortest and most pointed parables. It’s not clothed in metaphoric mystery but **drips with irony and lament**. It exposes the spiritual immaturity, petulance, and inconsistency of a people who are **never satisfied**, no matter who God sends.

The parable stands as the perfect capstone to our series—because it closes with a reminder that **truth was right in front of them**, yet **they refused to respond**, choosing childishness over conviction. Let us now explore the final parable in the words of our Lord and uncover its deep theological and practical implications.

## 1. The Text of the Parable

### Matthew's Account

*“But whereunto shall I liken this generation?*

*It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows,*

*And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced;*

*we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.*

*For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil.*

*The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber,*

*a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.”*

(Matthew 11:16–19)

### Luke's Account

*“And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation?*

*And to what are they like?*

*They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying,*

*We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.*

*For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil.*

*The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber,*

*a friend of publicans and sinners!*

*But wisdom is justified of all her children.”*

(Luke 7:31–35)

## 2. The Context: Complaints Against John and Jesus

This parable appears in the context of Jesus reflecting on how **both He and John the Baptist were rejected** by the religious elite.

- **John** came in austere, prophet-like severity—fasting, preaching judgment—and they said he was demon-possessed.
- **Jesus** came in grace, compassion, and fellowship—healing, eating, welcoming sinners—and they called Him a glutton and drunkard.

The parable is a **rhetorical indictment** of a generation that refused to **listen to God** regardless of the form He chose to speak in.

### 3. The Imagery: Children in the Marketplace

*“Like children sitting in the markets...”*

Jesus portrays a group of **children**, not adults. This is not a compliment. It reflects:

- **Immaturity**
- **Fickleness**
- **Self-centeredness**

The children call out to their peers, complaining that no one will “play” their games.

#### A. The Two “Games”

1. **Piping (Flute music):** A wedding celebration
  - The expectation: **Dancing**, joy, response
2. **Mourning:** A funeral dirge
  - The expectation: **Weeping**, solemnity, response

But in both cases, **the response is absent**. The children are annoyed—not because the game was wrong—but because **others refused to play along**.

### 4. The Application: Israel’s Rejection of Divine Messengers

Jesus interprets the parable immediately:

- **John the Baptist** = funeral dirge: calling for repentance, fasting, austerity
  - Israel said: *“He hath a devil.”*
- **Jesus** = flute music: offering joy, healing, and grace
  - Israel said: *“Glutton, winebibber, friend of sinners.”*

## A. Nothing Satisfied Them

This generation didn't want truth. They wanted **control, conformity to their expectations, and religion on their terms.**

They wanted a God who:

- Fit their preferences
- Confirmed their pride
- Catered to their tradition

But God sent:

- A **prophet in camel's hair** (John)
- And the **Messiah as a carpenter** (Jesus)

And they rejected **both.**

## 5. The Fickleness of the Crowd

*"We have piped... you didn't dance."*

*"We have mourned... you didn't weep."*

These statements reflect a **generation that only plays games**, expecting others to **conform to them**—and when they don't, they **dismiss and criticize.**

It's the same spirit we see today:

- **Preach grace**, they call you soft.
- **Preach judgment**, they call you harsh.
- **Preach the Bible**, they say you're outdated.
- **Preach the truth**, and they'll say you're judgmental.

## 6. The Accusations: Demon and Drunkard

*"John has a devil..."*

*"Jesus is a glutton and winebibber..."*

These accusations were not made in ignorance. They were made because **the truth made them uncomfortable**.

Jesus highlights the absurdity of the criticism:

- The **ascetic** is demonized.
- The **celebrant** is criminalized.

In other words, **God can't win** with the unrepentant heart. If He thunders from Sinai—they tremble and flee. If He speaks in a still small voice—they ignore it.

## 7. The Closing Statement: “Wisdom Is Justified...”

*“But wisdom is justified of her children.”*

(Matthew 11:19)

This is the key to the whole parable.

- Wisdom = God's plan and methods
- Her children = Those who **receive**, believe, and **respond** rightly

The world **rejects the package**, but God's true children **recognize the voice**, regardless of form.

John came with **fire and warning**—and the repentant were baptized.  
Jesus came with **mercy and healing**—and the humble received Him.

Both ministries were justified by the fruit they produced.

## 8. Doctrinal Implications

### A. God Speaks in Many Ways

- Through prophets (John)
- Through grace (Jesus)
- Through trials, sermons, Scripture

We must not reject God simply because **His method doesn't suit us**.

### B. Rejection of Truth Is Not Due to Style

People don't reject the Gospel because of:

- Music style
- Sermon length
- Pastor personality

They reject it because of **unbelief** and **hardness of heart**.

This parable exposes how critics will **always find a reason to object**—because the real issue is rebellion, not presentation.

### **C. Jesus Exposes the Generation's Hypocrisy**

He lays bare the **inconsistency** of the religious elite:

- They weren't seeking truth
- They were seeking **control and justification**

## **9. Spiritual Application**

### **A. Are You Playing Games with God?**

Do you:

- Choose what to obey based on feelings?
- Accept truth only when it comforts you?
- Dismiss truth-tellers because they don't match your preferences?

This parable calls us to **grow up** spiritually and stop acting like **spoiled children in the marketplace**.

### **B. Don't Critique the Messenger—Receive the Message**

If the messenger is preaching truth—listen.

- Whether they shout like John
- Or sit at dinner like Jesus

### **C. Let Wisdom Be Justified in You**

Don't be like the generation that saw **miracles and heard truth**, but **remained unconverted**.

Instead, let your life justify God's wisdom by:

- Embracing truth
- Bearing fruit
- Walking humbly with your Lord

#### 10. Cross-References in the KJV

- **Proverbs 1:20–22** – “Wisdom crieth without... how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?”
- **Hebrews 1:1–2** – “God... hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son...”
- **Romans 10:21** – “All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.”
- **John 1:11** – “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.”
- **Matthew 23:37** – “O Jerusalem... how often would I have gathered thy children...”

#### 11. Christ at the Center

Jesus is:

- The **Son of Man**, accused by sinners, yet the judge of all
- The **bridegroom who piped**, but was met with scorn
- The **wise One**, whose actions were pure and whose wisdom bears fruit

He is the perfect balance of **truth and grace, judgment and mercy**—and the world **rejected both in Him**.

#### 12. Why This Parable Ends the Series Perfectly

As the final parable in our 40-part study, this one:

- Reminds us that **God has spoken** in diverse ways
- Warns us against becoming **critical instead of convicted**
- Calls us to **mature faith**, not childish excuses

The message is clear:

*God has sent the prophets. God has sent His Son. Now is the time to respond in faith.*

## **Conclusion**

*The Parable of the Children in the Marketplace* is a final warning—a **mirror held up to the hearts of hearers**. It exposes:

- The childishness of unbelief
- The petty criticism of religious spectators
- The deep inconsistency of those who claim to seek truth but reject every form it takes

**Doctrinally**, it highlights the rejection of John and Jesus.

**Spiritually**, it warns us to examine whether we are **receivers of wisdom**, or **spectators playing games**.

**Eternally**, it forces the question: *When truth comes to you, do you yield—or critique the tune?*

Wisdom is justified of her children.

Which child are you?

## **Final Reflection: The Parables of Jesus—Eternal Truths, Timeless Impact**

Over the course of 40 parables, Jesus Christ—the Master Teacher—opened the windows of heaven to reveal deep spiritual truths cloaked in earthly stories. Through mustard seeds and fig trees, pearls and pounds, weddings and watchmen, Christ revealed not only **the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven**, but also the **condition of human hearts**, the **urgency of readiness**, and the **certainty of final judgment**.

Each parable was a divine invitation:

- To hear not just with ears, but with faith.
- To understand not just intellectually, but spiritually.
- To respond not with pride, but with repentance.

Whether He spoke of soils or servants, leaven or lost sons, Jesus always drew a dividing line: **those who hear and obey**, and **those who hear and walk away**.

These weren't mere moral stories. They were **kingdom blueprints, prophetic warnings,** and **portraits of God's heart.** Through them we meet a Savior who:

- Pursues the lost,
- Rewards the faithful,
- Warns the proud,
- And ultimately returns as King.

Let us not be as those who say, *"We have heard the music, but we will not dance."*

Let us instead say:

*"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."* (1 Samuel 3:9)

The parables are over—but the invitation remains.

He that hath ears to hear, **let him hear.**