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The Kingdom Of God The Thread Running Through Every Parable



By Dan Maines

The Kingdom Of God: The Thread Running Through Every Parable

Introduction

† When Jesus taught in parables, He wasn't simply telling moral stories or giving lessons on personal improvement. He was revealing the mystery of the Kingdom of God. Every parable, in one way or another, points to the arrival, growth, rejection, value, judgment, and ultimate establishment of God's Kingdom.

† Many sermons today focus on current events or personal

success, but Jesus centered His teaching on the Kingdom. If we understand the Kingdom, we understand the heart of Christ's ministry.

† The first century audience wasn't waiting for the end of the physical world. They were living through the end of the Old Covenant age and the establishment of the everlasting Kingdom promised by the prophets.

Matthew 13:11-13

And Jesus answered them, To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted. For whoever has, to him more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him. Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.

† Jesus explained that His parables revealed Kingdom truths to believers while concealing them from hardened Israel.

† The mysteries weren't secrets about events thousands of years away, they were God's unfolding plan to replace the Old Covenant with the New Covenant Kingdom.

† This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy that many would hear but refuse to understand. (Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:14-15)

Mark 4:26-29

And He was saying, "The kingdom of God is like a man who casts seed upon the soil; and he goes to bed at night and gets up daily, and the seed sprouts and grows-how, he himself does not know. The soil produces crops by itself; first the stalk, then the head, then the mature grain in the head. Now when the crop permits, he immediately puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

† The Kingdom didn't appear all at once. It began during Christ's earthly ministry and continued growing throughout the apostolic age.

† The harvest pointed toward the close of the Old Covenant age when God gathered His faithful people and judged unbelieving Israel. (Matthew 13:39-43; Matthew 24:31)

† Every stage unfolded exactly as God planned until the Kingdom stood complete.

Matthew 13:31-32

He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a person took and sowed in his field; and this is smaller than all the other seeds, but when it is fully grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the sky come and nest in its branches."

† The Kingdom began with what appeared to be a very small movement centered on Christ and His disciples.

† Within one generation it spread throughout the Roman world just as Jesus promised. (Colossians 1:6, 23)

† What looked insignificant became the everlasting Kingdom foretold by Daniel. (Daniel 2:44)

Luke 13:20-21

And again He said, "To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three sata of flour until it was all leavened."

† The Kingdom works from the inside out.

† Christ's reign spread quietly but continually until the New Covenant replaced the fading Old Covenant order.

† Hebrews says the first covenant was becoming obsolete and ready to disappear, exactly what happened before AD 70.

(Hebrews 8:13)

Daniel 2:44

And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which will never be destroyed, and that kingdom will not be left for another people; it will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, but it will itself endure forever.

† Jesus' Kingdom parables fulfilled Daniel's prophecy of an everlasting Kingdom.

† The Kingdom wasn't postponed into the distant future, it was established during the days of the Roman Empire exactly as Daniel foretold.

† Every Kingdom parable points back to this Old Testament promise. (Daniel 7:13-14; Mark 1:14-15)

Matthew 13:44

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field.

† The Kingdom was worth giving up everything to obtain.

† The first century believers endured persecution because they understood they were receiving something far greater than the earthly temple system.

† Hebrews reminds believers they were receiving a Kingdom that could never be shaken. (Hebrews 12:28)

Luke 17:20-21

Now He was questioned by the Pharisees as to when the kingdom of God was coming, and He answered them and said, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs that can be observed; nor will they say, 'Look, here it is!' or, 'There it is!' For

behold, the kingdom of God is in your midst."

† The Kingdom was never presented as an earthly political empire.

† Christ taught that God's reign was already present in their midst because the King Himself was standing among them.

† This explains why the Kingdom could grow quietly through the Gospel instead of by military conquest. (John 18:36; Colossians 1:13)

Matthew 22:1-14

Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who held a wedding feast for his son. And he sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened cattle are all butchered and everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast!"' But they paid no attention and went their separate ways, one to his own farm, another to his business, and the rest seized his slaves and treated them abusively, and then killed them. Now the king was angry, and he sent his armies and destroyed those murderers and set their city on fire. Then he *said to his slaves, 'The wedding feast is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. So go to the main roads, and invite whomever you find there to the wedding feast.' Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good; and the wedding hall was filled with dinner guests.

"But when the king came in to look over the dinner guests, he saw a man there who was not dressed in wedding clothes, and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?' And the man was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, 'Tie his hands and feet, and throw him into the outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth in

that place.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

† The wedding feast pictured God's invitation to Israel first, then to all who would believe.

† Those who rejected the King's invitation faced judgment, while those who accepted entered the New Covenant Kingdom.

† The destruction that followed the rejection of the King fits the judgment that came upon Jerusalem in that generation.

(Matthew 22:7; Matthew 24:34)

Luke 16:16

The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John came; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.

† Jesus marked a transition from the Old Covenant administration to the proclamation of the Kingdom.

† The Kingdom became the central message of Christ and His apostles.

† This fits perfectly with the New Covenant replacing the Old. (Hebrews 8:13)

Acts 28:30-31

Now Paul stayed two full years in his own rented lodging and welcomed all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching things about the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

† Paul's final recorded ministry was still centered on the Kingdom of God.

† The book of Acts opens with the Kingdom and closes with the Kingdom.

† This demonstrates that the Kingdom remained the primary message of the apostolic church. (Acts 1:3)

Historical References

† Josephus records that Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70 after rejecting Christ, bringing the Old Covenant system to its end. (The Jewish War, Book 6)

† Eusebius records that the believers remembered Christ's warnings and fled Jerusalem before its destruction. (Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5)

† Irenaeus affirmed that Christ fulfilled the Law and established the New Covenant promised by the prophets. (Against Heresies, Book 4)

How It Applies To Us Today

† We aren't waiting for the Kingdom to arrive because Christ established it.

† We live as citizens of that everlasting Kingdom every day.

† Every parable reminds us that Christ reigns now.

† Our hope isn't in earthly kingdoms but in the Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

† Instead of chasing headlines, we should study the Kingdom because that's what Jesus spent so much of His ministry teaching.

† If Jesus spent so much of His ministry teaching the Kingdom, then our teaching should do the same.

† The Church should be known for proclaiming Christ's present reign instead of endlessly speculating about future prophecy.

† Understanding the Kingdom helps us read every parable within its proper covenant context.

Q & A Appendix

Q: Were all of Jesus' parables about the Kingdom in some way?

A: Yes. Whether directly or indirectly, every parable reveals some aspect of God's Kingdom, its arrival, growth, value,

rejection, judgment, or fulfillment through Christ. (Matthew 13:10-17; Mark 4:33-34)

Q: Why did Jesus use parables instead of speaking plainly?

A: Jesus revealed Kingdom truth to believing disciples while concealing it from those who had hardened their hearts. This fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy. (Matthew 13:11-15; Isaiah 6:9-10)

Q: Has the Kingdom already been established?

A: Yes. Jesus announced it was at hand, the apostles proclaimed its arrival, and believers received the unshakable Kingdom before the destruction of Jerusalem. (Mark 1:14-15; Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28)

Q: Why did Jesus preach the Kingdom more than any other subject?

A: Because the Kingdom was the fulfillment of God's covenant promises and the central purpose of Christ's earthly ministry. Everything He accomplished pointed to the establishment of God's everlasting reign. (Matthew 4:17, 23; Luke 4:43)

Q: Did the apostles continue preaching the Kingdom after Jesus ascended?

A: Yes. From Acts through Paul's final imprisonment, the apostles continued proclaiming the Kingdom as their primary message, showing it had not been replaced with another gospel. (Acts 8:12; Acts 19:8; Acts 20:25; Acts 28:23, 31)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Matthew 13:11-13; Mark 4:26-29; Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:20-21; Daniel 2:44; Matthew 13:44; Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 16:16; Acts 28:30-31

† Josephus, The Jewish War, Book 6; Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History, Book 3, Chapter 5; Irenaeus, Against Heresies, Book 4

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