

“Parables, Metaphors, and Figurative Language”

- Well, we have learned from the previous study that in His Word, God laid out His revelation to man in a particular orderly fashion. We have learned that God’s Word has a beginning and an end, and if one desires to understand His Word, he MUST begin where God began --- In the beginning, Genesis 1:1.
- God has structured His Word in the beginning with a foundation in which all subsequent Scripture rests. This foundational frame work takes one from Genesis 1:1 through to Genesis 2:3.
- God has structured this foundational framework to build upon, with the remainder of Scripture building on the foundation with the use of Types/Antitypes, Parables, Metaphors, Figurative Language and use of numbers.

Parables, Metaphors, Figurative Language

- The word “parable” is an Anglicized form of the Greek word *parabole*, which is a compound word comprised of *para* (meaning, “alongside”) and *bole* (meaning, “to place,” or “to cast”).
Thus, *parabole* simply means “to place [or ‘to cast’] alongside.” The word, when used relative to biblical teaching, refers to additional truths placed alongside of previously revealed truths in order to provide further light concerning the prior truths.
- In this respect, parables in Scripture and the previous truths to which they relate are somewhat like types and antitypes. One will *help explain* the other, for they both relate to counterparts. And a rejection of one will *negatively reflect* on one’s understanding of the other.

Mat. 13:34 *All these things Jesus spoke to the multitude in parables; and without a parable He did not speak to them, 35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: "I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things kept secret from the foundation of the world."*

- Just as in the use of types in scripture, parables, metaphors, and the use of figurative language, form different methods of the way God gave His revelation to man. They form integral parts of Scripture, parts of the whole apart from which other portions of Scripture cannot be properly understood.
- Parables, metaphors, and figurative language are often thought of somewhat together, for parables usually employ a number of figurative expressions.
- Figurative expressions employed in parables or elsewhere in Scripture are *always* used after such a fashion that either the context renders them self-explanatory or they are explained in other portions of Scripture.
- In the following Scriptures we can see a scattering of parables in the Old Testament (**Judges 9:7-15; 2 Samuel 12:1-4; Isaiah 5:1-7**), but parables are seen in their fullest use in the Gospel accounts of the New Testament, during the latter part of Christ’s earthly ministry - and parables appear at this point in Christ’s ministry for a revealed reason and purpose.
- Christ began to use parables during His earthly ministry only after Israel had rejected the offer of the Kingdom of the heavens. Parables were first used after the events recorded in Matthew chapter twelve,

having to do with the blasphemous act of the Scribes and the Pharisees against the Holy Spirit. And through committing an act of this nature, these religious leaders had gone too far.

- They, in their rejection of the King and the heavenly Kingdom, had acted after a fashion that necessitated Christ announcing that this sin would not be forgiven them.

Mat 12:31 *"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. 32 "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.*

- And this sin is referred to in the Book of Hebrews as the “sin of unbelief,” or “the willful sin” for which there is no repentance –

Heb 3:12 *Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;*

Heb 10:26 *For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,*

Heb 12:15 *looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

- Christ’s statement relative to Israel not being forgiven throughout two ages for the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit would encompass time covered by both this age and the age to come -the Messianic Era (the Millennial Kingdom). This would include time covered in the antitype of the entire seven days in the opening 34 verses of Genesis 1.
- And, for all practical purposes, this was the point in Scripture where the offer of the heavenly kingdom was taken from Israel, though the announcement was not made until near the end of Christ’s earthly ministry;

Mat 21:43 *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

- Once the heavenly kingdom had been taken from Israel, there was then a need for the extensive use of parables in Christ’s earthly ministry, something that would have been out of place prior to that time, and this is exactly what occurred.

Mat. 13:10 *And the disciples came and said to Him, “Why do You speak to them in parables?” 11 He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the [a]mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given*

“Parables, Metaphors, and Figurative Language”

- ✓ Immediately after the events of Matthew chapter twelve, Christ departed from the house, went down by the seaside, and began to speak to the multitudes in parables.
- ✓ In this respect, we will note – **Mat 13:1** *The same day* [referring to the time of the events back in Chapter 12] *Jesus went out of the house, and sat by the seaside.*
- ✓ We see just prior to the giving of the Parable of the Sower that Christ left “the house” and sat by “the sea”. One could go to numerous passages in the Old Testament and discover that “the house” could be none other than “the house of Israel” - **Ezek 33:7** *"So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. Also see (Ezek 34:30; Hos 1:4; Jer 13:11; Isa 46:3).*

Note: The sea, is used in scripture as a metaphor for the Gentile nations as we can see from –

Isaiah 60:5 *Then you shall see and become radiant, And your heart shall swell with joy; Because the abundance of the sea shall be turned to you, The wealth of the Gentiles shall come to you.* In this verse it is plain that ‘the abundance of the sea’ and ‘the wealth of the Gentiles’ are synonymous.

The sea can also be a metaphor for the place of the dead as we see from –

Rev 20:13 *The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.*

- The symbolism, the figurative expressions in keeping with that which had occurred and that which is stated in Matthew 21:43 is essentially prophetic in nature and has to do with Christ departing from Israel, departing from “the house,” having to do with Israel, and going to “a nation” that was not Jewish, but mainly of Gentile origin and going down to “the sea,” foreshadowing His going to the Gentiles.

Acts 15:14 *"Simon has declared how God at the first visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name.*

Rom 11:25 *For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.*

- And that which had been offered to Israel, ‘the kingdom of the heavens’, after having been taken from Israel was to be offered to this other nation, the Church, “the one new man in Christ”, who would bear the fruits thereof .

Mat 21:43 *Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

1 Pet 2:9 *But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.*

- So then the seven parables from Matthew chapter 13 have to do primarily with the Church and deal with the beginning of this dispensation to the Millennial Kingdom.

“Parables, Metaphors, and Figurative Language”

- When we read the Parable of the Sower in Matthew 13:3-9, we will note that it has to do with four types of individuals sown out in the world, with a view to their bringing forth fruit for the kingdom.
- And we find the interpretation of this parable in;

Mat 13:18 *"Therefore hear the parable of the sower: 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. 20 "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. 22 "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. 23 "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."*

- In the interpretation, this whole overall message is specifically called “*the word of the kingdom*”, having to do with “*the mysteries of the kingdom of the heavens*”, which would be associated with “*the gospel of the glory of Christ*”

2 Cor 4:4 *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.*

- So, what can be said about the interpretation of parables? The same thing that can be said about the interpretation of types can also be said about the interpretation of parables. Types and parables must be interpreted after the same fashion – by comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Biblical Numbers

- These are some of the numbers and their meaning as used in the scriptures.

- 1 – Unity
- 2 – Union, Witnessing (context determines)
- 3 – Resurrection, Manifested Deity, Diving completeness and perfection
- 4 – Earth, World
- 5 – God’s grace and goodness
- 6 – Man
- 7 - Completion of that which is in view, spiritual perfection
- 8 - New beginning
- 9 - Fruit of the Spirit

10 - Ordinal perfection and numerical completion

11 – Judgment and disorder

12 - Governmental perfection

40 - Trial, probation, testing

666 - Antichrist; man’s number (three 6’s); incompleteness

1000 - Divine completeness and glory of God

Questions:

1. What is the definition and nature of a parable? Did we find any in the Old Testament?
 2. When and why did Christ begin to use parables during His earthly ministry?
 3. Read ***Matthew 12:30-32***. Who is Christ speaking to in these Scriptures and what time period is He speaking about? What have we learned about the unforgivable sin?
 4. Does this hold true for us Christians as well and can you find any Scriptures pertaining to this?
 5. Read ***Matthew 13:1***. How do we understand ‘the house’ and ‘the sea’ and where in the Scriptures did we go to see this?
 6. What period of time do the Matthew 13 parables cover and who do they primarily deal with?
 7. How do we understand the difference between an Age and a Dispensation? (See the attachment on Age vs. Dispensation)
-
- **We are done with the keys and now we will start from Genesis 1:1 in the next lesson God willing. Please let’s keep praying for all of us. Remain blessed!!!!**