

Jesus & the Mystery of the Kingdom

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[0 : 00] Okay, well, once again, I want to thank you all for being here this morning. Our attendance is a little lean. It's a busy time of the year, I guess.

Folks have other things to do. I just wanted to remind you that this will be our last monthly meeting for the year because the fourth Thursday of November will be Thanksgiving Day, and I'm not going to try to compete with that.

And then the fourth Thursday in December will be between Christmas and New Year's and a lot of activity and stuff going on, and we're not going to compete with that. So we'll just wait until the first of the year, and then at the first of the year, we will decide because I don't know if the interest level is sufficient to continue it, but you'll have an opportunity to provide any input or whatever you would like then.

And if we do continue it, I assume, well, it probably wouldn't be on a Thursday because we're scheduled for new classes that we'll be meeting every Thursday after the first of the year in Urbana.

So Wednesday is a possibility, and Tuesday is already taken, and Friday is a possibility, but that's just something to think about, and we may not have this class when New Year comes.

[1 : 40] It just depends on the level of interest, so keep that in mind if you would. Appreciate it. And you are as aware as I am, and you cannot help but be aware, of all of the chaos that is continuing to occur and, in a sense, multiply in what's going on in our culture today.

And as I've often said, we've never been here before. We are seeing things over the last couple of years that previously we would have only imagined, and it is looking more and more like what I call the great wrap-up is in the offering.

We're not interested in making any predictions, but as I've often told you, we can be sure of one thing, and that is we're closer than what anybody has ever been. Also, I noted that with interest that David Jeremiah, one of my favorite teachers, just did a series.

In fact, I don't know if it's a series or if it's a single, but anyway, I caught it last week and the week before. We usually get them on Sunday morning. And the message was entitled, The Great Disappearance.

And, of course, it was all focused upon the rapture. And he even gave a few illustrations, you know, like they can do with cameras nowadays where people are just sitting together and then all of a sudden, half of the people just disappear, just like that, you know.

[3 : 10] And we don't know exactly what the great disappearance is going to be like, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, but we do know it's going to be real. And we do know that this world is not our home, and we're just a passing through.

So whether we are on the brink of that, we do not know, but we do know that it is coming. So what I would like to share with you this morning has to do with one of the most, I think, insightful passages in all of Scripture.

And you realize, I would hope that folks who have been coming to Grace for some period of time realize that what Bible study is really all about, I think more than anything else, is connecting the dots, is seeing how everything in the Bible comes together.

And you've often heard me say that everything in the Bible is connected to everything in the Bible. And the more connections you make, the more sense it makes.

And if you have seen these diagrams, and I remember them from being a kid, where they did just a bunch of numbers plotted on a blank page, numbers like from 1 to 40, and they're scattered all over the place.

[4 : 35] And the name of the game, of course, is you connect the dots. You draw a line from 1 to 2, and it helps kids in the 1st and 2nd grade, you get their numbers down and all that good stuff, and you draw, and lo and behold, when you finish, it's a horsey.

You wouldn't know that by just looking at the dots. You couldn't figure out what that is. But once you connect the dots, it's, oh, now I get it. Now I see.

Well, that's what Bible study is all about. It is seeing, understanding, appreciating what God has done, and why he has done it, and what we are supposed to do about it.

And I've often thought that one of the saddest, saddest things in the whole world is for someone to be born, grow up, marry, have children, grow old, and die, and never knew what it was even about.

Think of that. And I fear that I am speaking of the majority of people. They have no idea. Well, what do you mean why I'm here?

[5 : 53] Well, I'm here because my mother and father birthed me, and that's why I'm here, and that's all it means to them. And I'm here to enjoy life and make as much money as I can, and then, as the old saying goes, whoever has the most toys when they die, they win.

You know. What a miserable outlook. So God has designed us for something more, much more than that. And connecting the dots helps us find that. So we're going to connect some dots.

And while you are turning to Matthew's Gospel, chapter 12 and 13, we want to see some things that are taking place in what I call the great pivot in Jesus' earthly life.

The great pivot. And when someone pivots, they swing around and face a position different from what they were facing before.

You just kind of pivot on your foot, and you're looking at a different scene than what was there before. And I like to think of Matthew 12 and 13 as being a great pivot, because it is here that it becomes very, very apparent to our Lord that Israel has crossed the line.

[7 : 15] And it is very apparent that they are not at all going to embrace him as their Messiah. And with that observation, I need to inject a question that has been asked down through the years.

And that is, will you make such a big deal out of Jesus coming and presenting the kingdom and offering the kingdom, and the people refused it, and then Jesus went on and died on the cross?

Well, what would have happened? In fact, I think we talked about this the last time a little bit. What would have happened if Israel had accepted Jesus? Where's the cross?

Well, there wouldn't have been any need for the cross, would there? Well, yes, there would, too. And the reason is because Jesus came specifically for the purpose of dying.

that was his main entree. That was his only reason for existing as Jesus of Nazareth. And for those who say, or would even think, well, the reason, the reason that they rejected him was because it was predicted that they would reject him.

[8 : 42] So they didn't have any choice. In order to fulfill the scriptures, and the scriptures talk much about Isaiah 53 and other places where the Messiah, when he comes, he's going to be rejected.

So there wasn't any way that those people could accept him because they were pre-programmed to reject him. They had to fulfill prophecy. That's nonsense. That's total nonsense.

The reason that that is put in there prophetically in Isaiah, and in fact, all the way back to Genesis 3 and verse 15, where the seed of the woman is going to crush the head of the serpent and so on.

The reason all of this prediction is in there is because, not because God was pre-programming the people so they wouldn't have any choice. That's nonsense. But God knew exactly what the people's response would be when the Messiah was presented, and that response was simply pre-recorded.

Let me tell you, Jesus is a gentleman. He doesn't go around forcing himself on anybody.

[9 : 54] Jesus presented himself as the Messiah, as the King of Israel, but the people were not made to accept him.

And this brings into play another very big theme of scripture that is commonly misunderstood even by a lot of Christians, and that is the dynamics of human volition and the responsibility that goes with it.

Let me say this just this one time and repeat it. It is a very, very serious thing to be a human being endowed with a will because a time is coming when everyone is going to be examined and evaluated on the basis of what they did or did not do with the will with the volition that God gave them.

We are free moral agents. Without free moral agency, there is no basis for evaluation. Our evaluation is going to be determined by what we do with that volition.

And there are two classes, and the first is in 1 Corinthians 3. No, we're not going to go there, but it's in 1 Corinthians 3, and it is the award throne of Christ.

[11 : 27] Everyone who is there is a believer. No unbelievers at the award throne of Christ. But there will be the evaluation of their works.

And those things that we do as believers are going to be accounted in heaven as wood, hay, stubble, or gold, silver, and precious stones.

Those are the two categories. Wood, hay, and stubble are all combustibles. They just go poof, up in smoke and they're gone. And a lot of Christians are going to have a lot of wood, hay, and stubble at the award throne of Christ when they see all of the things that they thought they did for the right reasons, but they were doing them for selfish reasons.

They're just going to go poof. And there will be no reward for that. And then there will be the gold, silver, and precious stone. And these are categories, and that will be the basis of rewards that we earned as believers in the exercise of our faith.

And that includes all kinds of things from soup to nuts, you name it. And it doesn't have to do with just preaching or teaching or anything. It's got a whole spectrum of all kinds of things because God takes everything into consideration and he knows not only who does what, but he also knows exactly why they do it.

[12 : 59] And that too is going to come into play. So that's part of what is coming in the great judgment. But what we want to look at now is a more earthly scene. And if you will look at Matthew's gospel chapter 12, we'll see where the controversy actually begins because it's going to crystallize in chapter 13.

And I want to inject this before time gets away because I don't always get to what I want to get to. So let me put this up there up front. Matthew chapter 13, that contains a whole list of parables in connection with the mysteries of the kingdom.

And the kingdom is that which is prayed for in what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount. And it is our prayer is the prayer for thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Now folks, very briefly let me just say, that kingdom has never come. But, there are those who believe it has.

Who are they? That's most Christians. And most Christian churches believe the kingdom has come and we are living in it.

[14 : 23] But it is a spiritual kingdom. kingdom. And the Pope of Rome is Jesus in disguise.

And he is administering the spiritual kingdom here on earth. That's the party line.

kingdom. And all of the bishops and priests, etc. are those of whom Jesus was speaking when he told the twelve, you shall sit upon the twelve thrones of Israel judging the twelve tribes in the kingdom.

And that's who the Pope and the bishops are. It's called apostolic succession. And they believe in good faith that the Pope of Rome is the same as Jesus Christ ruling here on earth.

So to obey the Pope is the same as obeying God and obeying Jesus. That's their view of the kingdom and it is a spiritualized kingdom. But where we differ, and by we I'm talking about a minority of believers like Grace Bible Church and other churches like ours, we believe that the kingdom of heaven has not come to earth.

[15 : 48] It is held in abeyance. It is postponed. And the reason it is postponed is because that which is supposed to be the catalyst for the kingdom, which is the nation of Israel, is not in agreement.

they have rejected their Messiah, they have rejected their king, when Jesus was presented as their Messiah, and as a result, the kingdom that was to come to earth, and by the way, let me inject this too, I hope I don't get too far afield, but this is all, it's all related, connecting those dots.

While Jesus was here on earth, he brought the original normality to earth, everywhere he went.

He healed diseases, because in the kingdom there's not going to be any diseases, and he gave sight to the blind, he did all of those things, he even exercised power and authority over the elements, like the raging storming sea, and all the rest of it, because he was who he was, and those were his credentials or his calling cards, and folks, that's the way the world is supposed to be.

There isn't supposed to be any cancer, there isn't supposed to be any death, isn't supposed to be any deception, isn't supposed to be any robbery or crime or rape or anything like that.

[17 : 25] Well, where did all these things come from? They came from the fall. That starts back in Genesis 3. And as a result of the fall, the first human being born on the earth murdered his own brother.

And the human race is off to a flying start. And do you see where we are today? Do you see what's happening in the Middle East? Do you see where we are historically with World War I and World War II, and we're on the threats of World War III?

What's wrong with this world? It's a fallen world. This is not the way it's supposed to be. How's it supposed to be? Peace, prosperity, joy, etc.

That is the kingdom that Jesus is going to bring. And to say that this now that we have, this is the kingdom, only spiritually.

not physically, not literally, not materially, just spiritually. Well, what does that mean? Spiritually?

[18 : 36] What have you got left? If it isn't material, and by the way, what did the fall consist of? was it just spiritually, or was it everything came crashing down?

The whole kit and caboodle. We live in a fallen world. We're fallen people. We're all under a sentence of death because of that thing that happened back in Genesis 3.

So, by the way, an interesting aside is I do not think that you can go to a Catholic church, and you probably can't go to very many Protestant churches without hearing them recite at least once, Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come.

What is that? That is a prayer for the kingdom. It's a prayer for the kingdom to come. Why?

Because the world's a mess. The world needs a king. And by the way, let me inject this too. The kingdom of heaven doesn't have any connection with dying and going to heaven, as we do now as believers, absent from the body, present with the Lord.

[19 : 53] That's entirely different. The kingdom of heaven is here on planet earth, literally, physically. That's where it will be, and Christ will be ruling and reigning here on this earth.

For the thousand years. For a thousand years, right. And that will be very physical, very literal, very honest.

Christ will be ruling and reigning. When Jesus said to the apostles in Matthew, I'm sorry, Luke 12, he said to the apostles, fear not, little flock, talking about his twelve apostles.

He said, for it is your father's good will to give you the kingdom.

And there in Matthew 19, when Jesus dealt with the rich young ruler, and this young man asked, what must I do to obtain eternal life?

[20 : 58] Jesus said, well, you keep the law, you keep the command. What Jesus was giving him was kingdom conditions, kingdom requirements. And this young man says, well, I've done all of those things from my youth up.

And Jesus said, all right, then there's only one thing left for you to do. Sell everything that you have and give the proceeds to the poor and come and follow me.

And the young man said, well, I'm not going to do that. And he went away sad, for he had many possessions. And the apostles were listening to all this, and they came up to Jesus after that young man left, and they said, hey, we heard what you told that young fellow.

We did that. We left everything. We left the fishing business. We left our families. Jesus, and we threw our lot in with you to follow you.

What's the payoff? What's going to be realized? What are we going to get out of this? And you can imagine Peter would be the one to ask the question. And Jesus said, verily I say unto you, that you who have followed me in the regeneration, when the son of man comes into his kingdom, you also, you 12, will sit upon the 12 thrones of Israel, judging the 12 tribes.

[22 : 33] And the apostles looked at each other, I'm sure, and said, oh, well, okay, okay, okay, good deal, good deal. You know, we'll look forward to that. Now, you realize that that is the time and the period in which we are living now.

Can't you just see the apostles? Can't you just see? Can't you see the supposed apostolic succession apostles who are the bishops and the priests and the pope, can you not see them ruling and reigning over the whole earth?

Wow. What an imagination we have to have, you know? But, yes. Quick question. When Jesus said that to the 12, was Judas still part of the 12 that he was speaking to at that time?

Yes. So, that? Yeah. As far as we know, he was one of the 12 at that time because he didn't peel off until the last supper.

And he left then and then committed suicide and he was replaced. So, he will not be the replacement. But, Matthias, Matthias who was chosen in place of him in Acts chapter 1, he will be that one.

[23 : 59] And, by the way, this is going to be very literal. And David the king is coming back. He's going to be ruling and reigning also. David the king?

Yes. Same one. Malachi, I think, makes that quite clear. And that just reminds me of all of these people. One of my favorite sayings, and I just love to say this because it's just so invigorating to me.

There are no dead people. I want you to always remember that. There are no dead people anywhere. There are only dead bodies.

Huge difference. Huge difference. Because when this spirit, whether regenerated or unregenerated, leaves this body, it doesn't cease to exist.

The body decomposes, decays, you throw it into the sea and the fish eat it or whatever, and the physical body is gone. But the real you lives on somewhere.

[25 : 07] That's a major theme of scripture, and it ought to be emphasized more than it is. So I want to get back to where we are. All right. So if you don't buy this, and I frankly do not, and I wonder if they still do, because the scriptures make it quite clear that when Jesus Christ is reigning on earth, peace will prevail throughout the whole world.

He is going to rule and reign with a rod of iron. That's another way of saying it's going to be a no-nonsense thing. People are going to behave themselves in a way that they don't now.

And for anybody, even with an active imagination, to believe that this is the kingdom and that the whole world population is in subjection to the pope, well, how are you going to convince everybody that is not a Catholic of that reality?

Because they're not buying it. What are you going to do with the Buddhists? What are you going to do with the Muslims? What are you going to do with Protestants? They're not in subjection to the pope.

They don't recognize. But listen, when Jesus Christ rules on this earth, everybody is going to be on board. There won't be any Muslims.

[26 : 34] There won't be any Buddhists. There won't be anything because righteousness and peace is going to prevail in the whole world.

And those who will, for whatever reason, not go along with that, as we'll see at the end of the tribulation or at the end of the millennial reign, they will be dealt with summarily. But the point I want to make, and this is so important because this, listen, this is the issue.

Well, let me qualify that. This is one of the two really big issues that separate Catholics from Protestants.

But even most Protestants are with the Catholics in saying that this is a spiritual kingdom and that we're now living in it. Have you heard people say things like we are building the kingdom of God?

That's exactly what they're talking about. And what that means theoretically is we are making the world better and better. Now, that was kind of popular back at the end of the 19th century.

[27 : 40] They were believing it, but the two world wars took the wind out of their sails and no longer were people able to buy. Every day and every way we're getting better and better.

No, we're not. Wake up. Every day we're getting worse and worse. I hate to be a pessimist, but I don't want to be a cockeyed optimist.

I want to be a realist. A realist is not an optimist or a pessimist. A realist is saying this is what it is. And it is what it is.

So, well, Matthew 13 and 12, 13 in particular, that is referred to as the mystery of the kingdom.

What is the mystery of the kingdom? Now, there are multiple mysteries in the Bible, but the mystery of the kingdom is drum roll.

[28 : 47] Ready? The mystery of the kingdom is its postponement. That's the mystery. It is held in obedience.

That means this is not the kingdom. This is an interregnum. It is something that is sandwiched in between that was never anticipated, never expected, never prophesied, never realized.

And it's just boom. It just explodes right on the spur of the moment. And we're left saying, oh, where did that come from? That is really different.

Well, it really is different. And we'll see some of the differences later. But I wanted, let's get back to chapter 12. Let's get it here. Same time, Jesus went on the Sabbath through the grain fields.

And his disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. And when the Pharisees saw it, and the Pharisees are dogging Jesus' steps everywhere he goes.

[30 : 00] They're watching him like a hawk. And they're trying to find something that they can write down and accuse him with later. Because he is, in the first place, he's too popular.

People don't go after us like that, like they go after him. And, well, the disciples are out there. And the Pharisees saw it. And they said, behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath.

What were they doing? Well, they were walking through these grain fields. And the grain was just about harvesting. And they would pick off a head of grain. And, by the way, the law of Moses even prescribes the legitimacy of doing that.

If you are away from home or out of town or whatever, you're walking through a grain field, even though it's not your grain field, you can pick heads of grain.

And you pick the head off the stalk of grain. And you put it between your hands. And you rub it together like that. And you go. And you blow away the chaff. But the grain is there in your hand.

[31 : 11] And you eat the grain and satisfy your hunger. And when it just becomes ripe like that, it's tender. It's called farik. Farik. And you get a handful of it. And it will stave off hunger.

And that's what they were doing. They'd pick that grain ahead. And the Pharisees said, how come your disciples are doing what's not lawful on the Sabbath? Well, all they were doing was picking up.

No, no, no. What they were doing was they were threshing the grain. They were threshing it. And threshing is work.

And the law forbids that. And why do you allow your disciples to do that? These guys are the original nitpickers. Jesus said, you swallow a camel.

You strain out a gnat. You know how big a gnat is? You strain out a gnat. Oh, no. God forbid. I wouldn't eat a gnat. I strained it out. And then you swallow a camel.

[32 : 14] Which is pretty ridiculous to think of a human being as swallowing a camel. But the point that Jesus is making is that they are super ridiculous in their pettiness and in their always looking for something.

These were the original nitpickers. And nobody could do anything to satisfy them because they added to the law of Moses things that Moses never even dreamed of.

And Jesus said, and you with the law, you provide a burden that neither the people nor we are able to bear. You just laid them down with that.

All of this nitpicking detail stuff. And that's what's the controversy here. And he gives the example about David and his men with him satisfying their hunger on the Sabbath.

And notice then in verse 5 he says, Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath the priests and the temple break the Sabbath who are innocent?

[33 : 16] But I say to you that something or someone greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, I desire compassion, not a sacrifice.

You would have not become. And then, boy, you talk about throwing down the gauntlet. That's what Jesus did in verse 8. He said, for the Son of Man.

That's the designation that he uses in reference to himself more than any other. It's in the third person. Instead of saying, for I, he says, the Son of Man.

The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. Who said that? Jesus said that. Well, who was he talking about? He's talking about himself. It's another way of saying, I came to seek and to save that which was lost.

But he speaks of it in the third person. And here he does the same thing. The Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath. What? Did you hear what he said?

[34 : 17] Do you realize the implications of that? This man is claiming to be equal to God. What does the law of Moses say is a penalty for that?

Death. Kill him. Stone him. While departing, he went into the synagogue. Now, they're still watching.

They're trailing him. He goes into the synagogue. And it's still on the Sabbath. And he says, is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath in order that they might accuse him?

That's a question they're asking to Jesus. Almost all of the questions they ever asked him was never for information. It was for entrapment. But we want to catch him saying something that is contrary to the law of Moses.

And it'll be, aha, gotcha. And we get enough gotchas built up on him. We'll take him out. That was the whole plan.

[35 : 23] Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath in order that they might accuse him? But he said to them, what man shall there be among you who shall have one sheep?

And if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will he not take hold of it and lift it out? Well, now, wait a minute. How are you going to do that without expending energy?

How are you going to do that without making some physical effort? You can't. Well, isn't that work? Yes, it's work.

But the law prescribes no work on the Sabbath under penalty of death. Remember the guy who went out and gathered sticks on the Sabbath back in the Old Testament? And the Lord smote him?

Guy dropped dead right there. Good grief. What's the big deal about gathering up a few pieces of firewood on the Sabbath? And the text doesn't go into it.

[36 : 24] But I know this. God is not unreasonable. And my suspicion, and this is just a wise man's suspicion. I don't have a thing in the world to back it up.

But I am convinced that it wasn't just picking up the sticks on the Sabbath. And I'll find out about this when I get to glory. But my guess is, and this is just a wise man's guess, so you can't take it to the bank.

My guess is he picked up the sticks with a defiant attitude. Let me just replay a little melodrama for you that's my imagination.

They need a fire. Need a fire going. And his wife says, well, we don't have any sticks. He says, well, I'll go out and gather. See, you can't do that on the Sabbath. You can't go out and go. Hey, woman.

Don't tell me I can't gather sticks on the Sabbath. I do what I please. Watch me. I'll bring your sticks back and we'll have a nice fire. So he goes out and collects the sticks.

[37 : 31] But he didn't really check it out with headquarters at all. And you know what God really, really hates? He hates a defiant attitude.

Because defiance is always born of two things. Ignorance and arrogance. And arrogance is ignorance on steroids.

And God hates that. Another word for it is pride. God hates pride. Because there is no basis for human pride.

It is a lie. And God hates all lies. He is a God of truth. And when a person thinks that they are proud and that they have something to be proud of, no, they don't.

Someone says, any preacher worth his salt has got to be a humble man. And you know what that means? It just means that he has come to the conclusion that he is essentially nothing.

[38 : 45] And God is everything. When you come to that conclusion, then you're usable. As long as you think you are the hot stuff, you're not usable.

You may be usable to other people, but you're not usable to God. So, this man, with the withered hand, oh my, and Jesus says, how much more is lawful to do going on the Sabbath?

And he said to the man, stretch out your hand. I can, I can just see this. This guy's got a withered hand. I don't know if it's a palsy or what, but it's a worthless hand.

And it's just, just dangles, you know, and Jesus said, stretch it out. I just, I just wonder if, if the guy looked at the Pharisees and he looked at Jesus, he looked at the Pharisees, he looked at Jesus, am I, am I going to do what he says or not?

And he looks at his hand. And he didn't say this, but maybe he thought this, oh, what the hell?

[40 : 07] And sticks his hand out. Just like that. Just like that. The hand is healed. And the Pharisees, instead of saying, how could he do that?

Who must this man be? He's in league with the Elisabeth.

Yeah. He, he heals hands and he casts out demons by the power of the demons. And Jesus answered that with, oh, that's interesting. Now, wouldn't that be self-defeating if he's going to cause demons to be, possess somebody and then he's going to cast them out?

What's the profit in that? And of course, the whole argument is nonsense. But I want you to notice verse 14. The Pharisees went out and counseled together against him as to how they might destroy him.

Right here is where they officially among themselves put out a contract on Jesus of Nazareth.

[41 : 34] The only question remains is how and when are we going to be able to do it? Big problem because of Jesus' popularity, he almost always had a crowd around him and the people hung on his every word so how are we going to get him alone so we can do him in without the people interfering?

And you know the night before as they were gathered together, Judas sitting there thinking hmm hmm this would be the perfect time to alert the powers that be so they can take him because the whole town is asleep.

So Judas gets up and Jesus said betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss remember that the kiss and Jesus said okay Judas that thou doest do quickly go on get out of here leave and everybody saw him leave but they thought one of the text says they thought they had run out of something at the feast and Judas Judas bear the bag that means Judas was the treasurer of the group he carried the money he was money bags and they thought that Judas had just gone out into the night to get some extra supplies but he went straight to the house of Caiaphas and awakened him and told him if you want him tonight's the night to take him so they gather a bunch of temple soldiers together and their torches and their lanterns and they come up the hill where Jesus is praying at Gethsemane and you know the rest of the story so now I just want to come over because our time is getting away I want to come over to Matthew 13 and I want you to note beginning here well we won't have time to read the whole thing but he's beginning to teach in parables chapter 13 and this is very significant and the disciples pick up on this right away

I can see I can see Peter and Matthew and James and John looking at each other with a quizzical expression on their face and say what's he doing you're what he's telling them what's what's going on here so after a while verse 10 the disciples came and said to him why do you speak to them in parables I want you to notice Jesus didn't say well I always speak to them in parables no no he didn't he always spoke to them in plain straightforward language he didn't disguise it or cover it with a story like a parable so you had to figure it out who in the parable is who or what and what a parable tends to make things more obscure when you speak straightforward nobody misunderstands what you say this is why the apostle Paul says Paul says we use great plainness of speech and that's a wonderful thing he would have made a lousy politician because they have ways of saying things without saying them and this speech factor was playing very large here why do you speak to them in parables and Jesus answered in verse 11 and said here's why

I do it because to you and he's talking about the 12 he's addressing them now they're kind of called away from the crowd the crowd's over there and Jesus has got the 12 here by him sides and he says to you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven but conjunction of contrast here comes an opposite to them it has not been granted it's a way of saying I am couching this in parables so that you will be able to get it but they won't he didn't want them to get it why wouldn't he want them to get it and the answer is because he knew they did not have ears to hear how many times did

[46 : 48] Jesus use that phrase anyway he that hath an ear to hear let him hear what you know what does that mean having an ear to hear it means you are listening with the intent of understanding and complying with what you hear Jesus did not want people to listen to him in order to just satisfy their curiosity curiosity that's a big big item if you have an ear to hear that means you are available and eager and willing to go with the truth if you do not have an ear to hear you may listen but you're listening only to satisfy your curiosity not to do anything about it that's the way most of the crowd was they were mesmerized by the miracles mesmerized by the teaching but their problem was moral they were not looking for any kind of moral change in their life and that's where the real rub was that's why the Pharisees and the scribes rejected

Jesus because of the moral demands he made upon them they weren't interested in that what were they interested in political what were they interested in Romans chase them out get rid of them establish Israel as a kingdom are you going to restore the kingdom at this time that's what the apostles asked in Acts 1 and they had nothing but a political interest in being able to utilize Jesus any way they could to serve their ends but they weren't interested in what was the word John used it repent why the kingdom of heaven is at hand repent means change your mind it comes from a compound Greek word metanoia and the word meta is the word from which we get the word through and it means it's part of the word metastasize if a tumor has metastasized that means it's broken out and gotten through and into other tissues and then the metanoia is the word that comes from the mind and through the mind it means repentance is a mental intellectual exercise that appeals to the will and what it actually requires is you stop doing whatever it is you are doing and you reverse yourself that's what repent means change your mind because if you don't change your mind you won't change your behavior because behavior change always comes from the mind first from the determination from the will and then that's what enables you to change your mind these people weren't interested in that and so many of them just listened out of curiosity they were charmed by what he said they were mesmerized because he was so eloquent and so reasonable in what he said but so many of them were not buying it especially along the leaders and Jesus is saying if I take the truths I have to give to you 12 and break them down in plain language so that they can get it you know what

I would be doing I would be casting my pearls before swine and I'm not going to do that so he goes on to say verse 12 for whoever has that is whoever now possesses the truth that he's got to share to him shall more be given nothing nothing paves the way for the accumulation of truth than truth that is already at hand you build truth on truth you don't build truth on error you build truth on truth and the nature of truth is the more truth you get the more truth you get whoever has to him shall more be given and he shall have an abundance but whoever does not have even what he has and some translations render this even what he seems to have shall be taken away from him therefore that is why which is what the word therefore means that is why

I speak to them in parables because while seeing they do not see in other words is there anything wrong with their vision they get 20-20 vision yeah they can see but in seeing physically does not mean that they are seeing spiritually and that's exactly where most people are today even in our world seeing in two different ways if I say do you see that bird flying there you can look up with your physical eyes and you see it and you say yeah I see it but if I say do you see what I'm talking about that's not seeing with your eyes that's understanding in other words do you get it do you get it listen people who want to get it will get it God will get the truth to those who are available to it but he will not cast his pearl before swine by inundating people who only want to know out of curiosity

God you tell me what you want me to do and then I will decide whether or not I'm going to do it well honey you can wait till the cows come home and you're not going to get it because God reveals his will to those who are willing to do it not those who want to play games and make a decision and say well then I'll decide whether or not I want to do it I'm in charge of me and that's the attitude that fallen people have so he quotes Isaiah from chapter six and verse ten Isaiah wrote this before Jesus quoted it seven hundred years earlier and he wrote it prophetically speaking of this very crowd no doubt there were those in Isaiah's time also but now they're here also you will keep on hearing but will not understand in other words the secret is not volume oh you'll get the volume but you will not understand and you will keep on seeing but you will not perceive for the heart the thinking process the emotions the will of this people has become dull means thick thick headed you ever heard anybody called thick headed boneheaded dense you just don't get it that was their problem and it invaded their spirit not just their mind but their spirit it affected their attitude to prevent themselves from doing that they've closed with their ears and they've closed with their eyes so that they will not and cannot get the truth and that

[54 : 56] I should they should understand with their heart turn again and I should heal them but here's another contrast but blessed are your eyes because they see and your ears because they hear truly I say to you many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see did not see it and to hear what you hear and did not hear so these are a privileged class and to be sure well our time has already gone but I got to give you one more reference because I want you to note the quote that is given here in Matthew 13 and come over if you will very quickly to the Acts of the Apostles and we'll see if we can put the icing on the cake if it is at all edible last chapter Acts 28 and we've got a repetition here where

Jesus is doing the same thing only with different people and he is at Rome and he's staying in his own hired villa and they said a day the Jews come out to hear him and these are all Jews who are coming out to hear him and he is talking to them about the kingdom of God and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus who now of course has been crucified years earlier this is near the end of Paul's ministry Jesus has been in heaven for quite some time and the text says concerning Jesus both from the law of Moses and the prophets being reminded the new testament didn't even exist when this was given and from the prophets from morning to evening some were being persuaded by the thing spoken which is another way of saying some of these people had ears to hear they were really looking for truth in verse 24 and others would not believe and when they did not agree with one another but began leaving after

Paul had spoken one parting word the Holy Spirit rightly spoke through Isaiah the prophet to your fathers saying and here's Isaiah's quote again in other words with Israel nothing has changed this was the attitude of the ruling class and here he is saying that this is what characterizes Israel now so something else is going to happen and if anybody has to leave because you're on a tight schedule please feel free to leave and nobody will think you're rude but I've got to come to this one last verse and this time I really mean it it's Ephesians chapter 3 and Paul is bringing them up to speed and these of all people are not Jews these are Gentiles there may be some Jews there we're in Ephesians 3 and Paul says for this reason I

Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles if indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you that is you Gentiles because Paul is the apostle to the Gentiles that by revelation there was made known unto me the mystery what mystery the mystery of the postponement of the kingdom that's the mystery made known to me the mystery of Christ which in other generations was not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets in the spirit what is that mystery okay I'm glad you asked says Paul to be specific the mystery is that the

Gentiles are fellow heirs and fellow members of the body of Christ and fellow partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of his power to me the very least of all saints this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ listen these are the same people that Jesus told the twelve apostles don't go to the Gentiles go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel don't go to the Samaritans don't go to the Gentiles stick with Israel now he's saying that the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of

[60 : 13] Christ and to bring to light to bring to the surface so everybody can see it what is the administration or the dispensation of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in God who created all things wow you mean to tell me that God had something in store for the Gentiles also yep and you know how he's going to do it he's going to do it through the Jews even though the Jews are not cooperating he's going to do it anyway through the Jews so he takes the whole nation of Israel the law of Moses the whole nine yards all the rest of it and he puts all of that on hold and he brings in something that was unplanned unprophesied Jews and Gentiles are put together on one footing so that there is neither bond nor free male nor female

Jew nor Gentile you are all one in Christ this is a whole new thing my oh my and I wish we could say that we have done more than scratch the scratch on the surface but that's all we've done we've just scratched the scratch and you know if this study right here if this helped you to connect a couple more dots then it's worthwhile and I am so grateful any comments or questions anybody and I apologize for not leaving time for them yes what's going on in Israel right now and they're making Israel to be the enemy I don't understand what's going on I'm sorry dear I don't I don't have my hearing aids in because I gave up on them I'm ready to scrap them and get another pair but anyway what were you saying well what's going on in

Israel now well I making Israel to be the enemy yeah I can't tell you exactly what's going on with Israel right now other than what you read the newspapers and see on the tube because in essence I don't know I'll just say this this could very well be and I'm not saying it is I'm just saying it could be the beginning of the big wrap up because we do know that when it occurs it's not going to be in the US of A it's patriotic as

I can be but I really just let me share this with you I'm really really concerned about our power supply about the grids that really scares me and they are just not at all protected the way they ought to be and I well remember I well remember I think it was probably back in the 80s 70s 80s something like that the whole the whole East Coast shut down all New York and everything went black you know what happened anybody remember that huh yeah squirrel a lousy little squirrel got electrocuted in a power line up in Niagara Falls and everything went dark

I mean millions of people were put in the dark from a squirrel yeah that's how vulnerable we were then and I cannot tell you with any great authority because I haven't checked with any great authority but but I read a little here and here little there and my fear is that not a whole lot has been done to correct that and our whole power grid needs a very expensive major overhaul and the reason it probably hasn't been done is because our government wants to spend money on other things but let me tell you something if that power grid goes down Katie bar the door United States is not going anywhere or doing anything you know what the name of the game will be survive that's all just survive because your car won't work planes won't fly your refrigerator won't work your radio won't work your TV won't work nothing will work and if anybody is an Amishman they're probably going to be better off than anybody else but what think of the effect do you have any idea how many people would commit suicide after the first 30 days do you have any idea what services that we take for granted now would not even be available then do you have any idea how difficult it would be to bury bodies and get them underground there won't be any crematories nothing nothing works nothing works nothing works our hands would be tied it would be almost as if the US of A didn't even exist our ships won't sail planes won't fly trains won't run cars won't run nothing nothing you just can't imagine that in a flash we would be back into the early 19th century my oh my that's my concern and I just

[66 : 38] I just hope that there are enough people in Washington D.C. that are being kept awake at night because of this and try to get it fixed because we are so vulnerable that you would not believe it and you know all of these people that have been coming across the border you know how many of them are from the Mideast we don't know we don't know who they are we don't know where they are we don't know why they're here we don't know if they're just waiting on orders from Tehran and if they're planning another 9-11 or this or that or maybe they just want to set bombs off in maybe 30 or 40 different places on queue all around the United States I mean big powerful explosive think of what effect that would have think of what effect that would have on the morale of people we would be so employed in just trying to survive and get along here we wouldn't even care about what's happening in the Mideast besides you wouldn't have any way of knowing anyway because there aren't any radios at work well now that I've cheered you up with that but here's the bright spots here and it always comes back to this always comes back to this because it's the only thing to come back to

God is on that throne and like Dr. Walter Wilson said years ago and I had the pleasure of driving him around when he came here this was back in the 70s and I says we were talking about what was going on then and I said well I said Dr.

Wilson it's great to know that God is still on the throne he says oh I don't agree and I said what do you mean and he said I don't agree that God is still on the throne he says young man God is on the throne but he isn't still he works all things after the counsel of his own will and sometimes when it looks at us like God isn't doing anything where are you when I need you you know he knows exactly what he's doing and he knows exactly when to do it and how to do it and he's never 30 seconds late for anything that is my comfort base that allows me to sleep at night and just wow what a God we serve amen well once again I've apologized for running over I thought maybe this was the last time we'd be meeting so I wanted to get my licks in thank you for your kind attention thank you for your kind attention thank you for your kind attention thank you for your kind attention