

PANORAMA OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

A Change in Christ's Ministry



Teaching in Parables

XII. A change in Christ's ministry in response to His rejection

A. Introduction to the parables

1. A parable is a true-to-life story used to illustrate or illuminate a truth.
 - a. The term comes from the Greek word *PARABALLO*, *PARA* meaning beside and *BALLO* meaning to throw.

Teaching in Parables

- b. Thus, a parable is an illustrative story thrown alongside to shed light on the lesson being taught.

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2. Jesus taught in parables to encourage people to think.
3. Jesus never told a parable without a teaching context because He designed each parable to solve a problem, answer a question, or illustrate a principle.
 - a. Interpreting a parable involves searching its context to discover that problem, question, or truth.

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- b. If an interpretation does not answer the question, solve the problem, or illustrate the truth in context, then that interpretation is wrong.
- c. Correct interpretation of parables depends on correct understanding of the culture.

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4. Jesus expected believers to understand the message of each parable.
 - a. The literal truth Jesus taught through a parable can be correctly understood only through a literal interpretation.

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- b. Although parables may contain figures of speech like similes (a stated likeness) or metaphors (an implied likeness), their theological truth depends on the literal truth those figures of speech help communicate.

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B. The parable of the sower – Matthew 13:1-9, Mark 4:1-12, Luke 8:4-10

1. Matthew 13:1 – Just before Jesus taught six parables about the Kingdom of Heaven, He taught the Parable of the Sower to illustrate the importance of humbly listening to and obeying God's message.

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2. Matthew 13:2 – This parable did not teach anything new since the response to God's message as reflected by the different soils is a dispensational constant, true of people in every age.
3. Matthew 13:3 – Since the seed is the message of the Kingdom (Matthew 13:19), the sower must be the messenger (in this case Jesus).

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4. Matthew 13:4 – Birds (Satan) did not allow this seed to take root in the ground.
5. Matthew 13:5-6 – This seed sprouted life but was not able to take firm root; therefore, the heat(suffering) withered it.
6. Matthew 13:7 – This seed sprouted life, but thorns choked it.
7. Matthew 13:8 – This seed sprouted life, grew, and produced fruit.

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8. Matthew 13:9 – The parable introducing this series of parables was meant to be heard by those willing to listen. Did the Pharisees have ears?

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C. Jesus' reason for the parables – Matthew 13:10-17, Mark 4:10-12, Luke 8:9-10

1. Luke 8:9 – The disciple's question indicated that Jesus was teaching a new Truth, something different.
2. Matthew 13:10 – This shift in the Lord's ministry was connected to Israel's national rejection of Him as Messiah. Matthew 12

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3. Matthew 13:11 – Jesus' used parables to provide understanding of unrevealed aspects of the Kingdom to those accepting Him and to conceal the mysteries of the Kingdom to those rejecting Him.
4. Matthew 13:12 – God had given much to Israel, His chosen people, but they had not handled the truth responsibly. They had wasted their unique opportunity.

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5. Matthew 13:13-15 – Jesus quoted Isaiah to emphasize the Jews' refusal to listen to God's message.
6. Matthew 13:16-17 – Jesus said that the disciples' willingness to see and hear placed them in a blessed position.

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D. The parable of the sower explained – Matthew 13:18-23, Mark 4:13-20, Luke 8:11-15

1. Matthew 13:18 – Jesus wanted His disciples to understand the parable just as He wants us to understand His Word.
2. Matthew 13:19 – Jesus interpreted the Parable of the Sower for the disciples and in doing so set the interpretive principle for understanding parables. Symbols represent literal historical realities.

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- a. Matthew 13:19a – The seed was the message about the Kingdom proclaimed to Israel by John the Baptist, Jesus, and the disciples.
- b. Matthew 13:19b – The first soil did not receive the seed, illustrating Israel's religious leaders' rejection of the message of the Kingdom.

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3. Matthew 13:20-21 – The rocky soil represented a genuine response that resulted in life but did not allow strong root production. Some hearers failed to endure in the midst of persecution (suffering).
4. Matthew 13:22 – The thorny soil choked the growth of fruitful plants, illustrating a genuine response to the message that produced spiritual growth but later succumbed to the distractions (things) of this world.

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5. Matthew 13:23 – The final soil responded by producing great fruit. The humble hearer received even greater understanding of the Kingdom by continuing to properly respond to the message in faith.

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E. The parable of tares and its explanation – Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

1. Matthew 13:24 – This first of the Kingdom parables introduced new facts about the Kingdom of Heaven.
 - a. Matthew 13:36 – Jesus told this parable in public to the crowd but explained it in private to His disciples to prepare them for His leaving.

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- b. Matthew 13:37 – The Son of Man, a Messianic title, identified Jesus as the Sower.

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2. Matthew 13:25 – An enemy sowed tares among the wheat when the Sower's men failed to keep watch.
 - a. Matthew 13:38a – The good seeds were those who responded with faith to the message, indicating that the *sons of the Kingdom* will be present in the world.
 - b. Matthew 13:38b - The bad seeds were those who did not respond to the message.

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- c. Matthew 13:39a – Satan, the enemy, sowed the bad seed.

Teaching in Parables

3. Matthew 13:26 – The truth about the two seeds became known as the plants grew.
4. Matthew 13:27-30 – The landowner wanted to wait until the harvest to separate the two because the tares would uproot the wheat, illustrating that good and evil will coexist until the end of the age (the end of the time of the Gentiles).

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- a. Matthew 13:39b-40a – Good and evil will coexist until God establishes the Kingdom of Heaven.
- b. Matthew 13:40b – The age mentioned here (the time of the Gentiles) extends from Christ's ascension until His second coming to establish the Kingdom.

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- c. Matthew 13:41-43 – After the Tribulation, which completes the times of the Gentiles begun during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, the righteous ones will shine forth in God's Kingdom.