

The Kingdom of God and Parables

Parable is from παρά (a preposition meaning “nearby or beside”) and βάλλω (a verb meaning “to cast or throw”).

A parable is a comparison or similitude.

There are some parables in the OT, but our focus will be on the NT usage of them and how they relate to the Kingdom of God, the church.

Prophecies in the OT that point to the future coming of the Kingdom of God:

- 2 Samuel 7:12-13 – one out of David’s lineage would sit on a throne (Acts 2:30; 13:30-39).
- Isaiah 2:2-4 (Mic. 4:1-3) – God’s house would come out of Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4).
- Isaiah 9:6-7 – the throne of David’s kingdom, government (Lk. 1:32-33; Acts 2:29-36).
- Daniel 2:36-45 – it would appear during a fourth kingdom (Rome).

Kingdom (βασιλεία) means, “royal dominion, kingdom.”

The existence of a kingdom necessitates a King or Ruler and members of the kingdom, or subjects.

The NT clearly states that there was, in the 1st century, the present Kingdom of God/heaven.

How do we know that the church and the kingdom are the same institution?

- The OT prophecies and their fulfillment
- Matthew 16:18-19
- Acts 14:21-27
- Colossians 1:13; 4:11
- 1 Timothy 6:15
- Hebrews 12:28
- Revelation 1:9

The Kingdom of Christ is not an earthly (physical, political) empire:

- John 18:33-37
- Jesus cannot be a King or Priest on earth, yet we are told that He is King and Priest (Jer. 22:24-30; Matt. 1:11-12; Heb. 7:11-14; 8:1-4).

Sometimes, the kingdom is a reference to the eternal kingdom, i.e. heaven.

- 1 Corinthians 6:10; 15:50
- Galatians 5:21
- Ephesians 5:5
- 2 Timothy 4:1
- 2 Peter 1:11

The Kingdom on earth:

- The Kingdom was “at hand” during the ministry of John and Jesus (Matt. 3:2; 4:17).

- Was witnessed by those who heard Jesus (Mk. 9:1).
- To come with power (Mk. 9:1; Lk. 24:44-49; Acts 1:4-8; 2:1-4).
- Jesus is King (1 Tim. 6:15) and Head (Eph. 5:23).

If the Kingdom of Christ has not yet been established, here are some consequences...

- We must reestablish the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires (Dan. 2).
- Jesus misled His audience (Mk. 9:1).
- The Colossians were not in the Kingdom (Col. 1:13).
- John was not in the Kingdom (Rev. 1:9).
- Jesus is not King (1 Tim. 6:15).

Why did Jesus use parables?

- Matt. 13:10-17.
- Mk. 4:10-12.
- Lk. 8:9-10.
- To reveal truths to His apostles that others would not see/understand.

First mention in the NT is Matthew 13:3 and is followed by 7 parables in the same chapter:

- The Sower (Matt. 13:3-9 and explained in v. 18-23).
- The Wheat and Tares (Matt. 13:24-30 and explained in v. 36-43).
- The Mustard Seed (Matt. 13:31-32).
- The Leaven (Matt. 13:33).
- The Hidden Treasure (Matt. 13:44).
- The Pearl of Great Price (Matt. 13:45-46).
- The Dragnet (Matt. 13:47-50).

Other parables recorded in Matthew:

- Wineskins (9:14-17).
- The Lost Sheep (18:10-14).
- The Unforgiving Servant (18:21-35).
- Workers in the Vineyard (20:1-16).
- Two Sons (21:28-32).
- Wicked Vinedressers (21:33-46).
- Wedding Feast (22:1-14).
- Fig Tree (24:32-35).
- Wise and Foolish Virgins (25:1-13).
- Talents (25:14-30).

Parables recorded in Mark:

- Wineskins (2:18-22).
- The Sower (4:1-9, 13-20).
- Growing Seed (4:26-29).
- Mustard Seed (4:30-34).

- Wicked Vinedressers (12:1-12).
- Fig Tree (13:28-31).

Parables Recorded in Luke:

- Wineskins (5:33-39).
- Sower (8:4-15).
- Good Samaritan (10:25-37).
- Prayer (11:5-8).
- Rich Fool (12:13-21).
- Two Servants (12:35-48).
- Barren Fig Tree (13:6-9).
- Mustard Seed (13:18-19).
- Leaven (13:20-21).
- Wedding Invitation (14:7-14).
- Great Supper (14:15-24).
- Lost Sheep (15:1-7).
- Lost Coin (15:8-10).
- Lost Boys (15:11-32).
- Unjust Steward (16:1-13).
- Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31).
- Persistent Widow (18:1-8).
- Pharisee and Sinner (18:9-14).
- Minas (19:11-27).
- Wicked Vinedressers (20:9-19).
- Fig Tree (21:29-33).

Parables Recorded in John:

- Shepherd (10:1-18).

Parallels:

- The Sower – Matt. 13; Mk. 4; Lk. 8.
- The Mustard Seed – Matt. 13; Mk. 4; Lk. 13.
- The Leaven – Matt. 13; Lk. 13.
- Wineskins – Matt. 9; Mk. 2; Lk. 5.
- The Lost Sheep – Matt. 18; Lk. 15.
- Wicked Vinedressers – Matt. 21; Mk. 12; Lk. 20.
- Fig Tree – Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21.