

A copy of this lesson is posted in Adobe pdf format at <http://cranfordville.com> under [Bible Studies](#) in the Bible Study Aids section. A note about the [blue, underlined](#) material: These are hyperlinks that allow you to click them on and bring up the specified scripture passage automatically while working inside the pdf file connected to the internet. Just use your web browser's back arrow or the taskbar to return to the lesson material.

Quick Links to the Study

I. [Context](#)

- a. [Historical](#)
- b. [Literary](#)

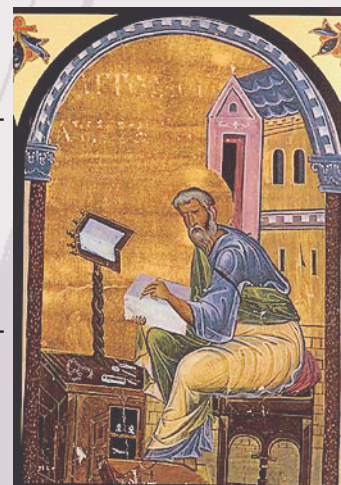
II. [Message](#)

- a. [A Demanding Treasure, vv. 44-50](#)
- b. [A Necessary Understanding, vv. 51-52](#)

This study brings us to the last three parables in the collection found in Matthew 13. Additionally, the conclusions material (vv. 51-52) to the entire section, 13:1-52, comes at the very end with summary effect. In the Smyth-Helwys Formations series, this begins a four part study on the Kingdom of God.

The major vehicle of Jesus' teaching as found in the synoptic gospels was the parable. Although modern studies have defined the literary form "parable" in rather precise terms, the concept was much more flexible in the ancient world in both Greco-Roman and Jewish traditions. This distinct literary form requires some additional considerations in the interpretative process, if a correct understanding of the text is to be achieved. Some of these features will be considered in the [Literary Context](#) discussion below.

The key subject of Jesus' teachings in the synoptic gospels is the Kingdom of God. Although a topic with considerable discussion and difference of opinion over its precise meaning, the broad contours of Jesus' idea of God's rule both in this world and the world to come are relatively easy to understand. His idea of how God rules in this world stands in stark contrast to the first century Jewish understanding. And this was the source of much of the tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders of that day. Through these four studies, combined with previous studies especially from Matthew 13 ([Mt. 13:24-30, 36-43](#) and [Mt.13:31-33](#)), we can gain a much clearer understanding of the Kingdom of God.



I. [Context](#)

Since we have studied texts from the gospel of Matthew [numerous times](#), material from those studies that are relevant to our study will be either copied or summarized here with hyperlinks to them provided.

a. Historical The **external history**, that is, the compositional history, of the Gospel of Matthew comes up against the anonymous nature of the document at the outset. That is, no author identification is contained inside the document itself. The heading, "The Gospel according to Matthew," usually printed in most English translations reflects the Greek head-

ing KATA MAΘΘΑΙΟΝ, which was added to the document after it had gone through about a century of being copied after the initial writing of the document in the late 60s to middle 70s of the first Christian century. The heading, which links Matthew with this document, reflects the viewpoint of post-apostolic Christian tradition as to authorship. As Howard

Clark Kee ("The Gospel of Matthew," *The Interpreter's One Volume Commentary on the Bible*, iPreach) describes:

From the early 2nd cent. down to the present, Christians have believed that the first gospel in the NT was also the first to be written and that the author was Matthew the tax collector, a disciple of Jesus (9:9). The source of this persistent belief can be traced back as far as ca. A.D. 130, when Papias, a bishop in Hierapolis, a city of Asia Minor, wrote a work titled "Exposition of the Oracles of the Lord." His writing, which is known only from fragments quoted by later Christian writers, reports that Matthew, the disciple, compiled the sayings of the Lord in Hebrew. Those who have quoted Papias seem to have accepted his statement without question as referring to the First Gospel.

Yet, several major barriers must be overcome before this ancient Christian tradition gains full acceptance. Kee addresses one of these in relation to the major source of that tradition with Papias:

There are several difficulties with this assumption, however. (a) The gospel consists of a rather full account of Jesus' public ministry, not merely of a series of sayings. (b) Detailed analysis of Matt. shows that the author used Mark as one of his sources (see below). (c) Mark and therefore Matt., for which Mark was a source, were written in Greek, not Hebrew. In view of these difficulties, it is plausible to assume that Papias is referring, not to Matt. as we know it, but perhaps to a now lost collection of sayings of Jesus.

Other obstacles exist as well. Most notable among them is the difficulty in explaining how a Jewish tax collector, whose job automatically placed him on the fringe of Jewish religious life, could develop the skills to be able to argue his case for Jesus as the promised Messiah using patterns of scribal argumentation ranked among the best one can find in ancient Jewish writings. The presentation of his case reflects persuasion skills matching and following thought patterns found among the most skilled of the ancient rabbis in the Mishnah etc. Several other barriers also exist in regard to this early church tradition and are a part of the challenges to be faced in at-

tempting to assert the accuracy of Matthew as the author of the first gospel.

For me, it's better to speak of the Matthean community, without fully assuming the early church tradition, as the source of this document. This divinely inspired document arose out of a desire to defend the belief in Jesus as the promised Messiah prophesied in the Hebrew Bible. Evidently this need was occasioned by the First Jewish War (appx. 66-70 AD), which resulted in the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem and a huge fear among Jewish people for the continuing existence of their way of life and religious heritage. The religious community of mostly Jewish believers, possibly in the Roman province of Syria in either Damascus or Antioch -- or both -- came under strong pressure to abandon their Christian faith in favor of the synagogue tradition of Judaism as a way to help preserve that threatened heritage. God inspired this community -- along with individuals within it -- to produce the Gospel of Matthew in order to demonstrate just the opposite. In order to be consistent with what God had begun in the Old Testament faithful Jews should accept Jesus as their Messiah, since Christ represented the culmination of the Old Testament revelation and promises for His covenant people.

Regarding the **internal history** of this passage, several considerations need to be given attention. Those are closely connected to the literary setting of the passage as well. Matthew's Gospel sets up a historical setting for this passage that includes 13:1-52. The narrative introduction is verses 1-3a (NRSV:

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying:

Chapter thirteen is paralleled by Mark 4 and Luke 8 in most aspects. Both contain a narrative introduction to their respective collection of parables that Jesus taught:

Mt. 13:1-3a (NRSV)

1 That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. 2 Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. 3 And he told them many things in parables, saying:

Mk. 4:1-2 (NRSV)

1 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. 2 He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them:

Lk. 8:4 (NRSV)

4 When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable:

(cf. Lk. 5:1-3 for a more exact parallel to Matthew and Mark)

Donald Senior ("Matthew," *Abingdon New Testament Commentaries*, iPreach) has a helpful sum-

mation of the narrative significance of Matt. 13:1-3a: In the immediately preceding scene Jesus was with

his disciples and the crowds in a house and had pointed to his disciples as his true family, as those who did “the will of my Father” (12:46-50). At the beginning of the discourse he leaves the house and sits in a boat along the shore in order to address the great crowds that had gathered on the beach (13:1). As the discourse continues, both the “crowds” (13:34) and the “disciples” (13:10) are present. But in 13:36 Jesus moves away from the crowds and back into the house with his disciples, and the remainder of the discourse appears directed exclusively at them. Thus the overall movement of the discourse is from a general interaction with the crowds to a focus on the disciples alone.

The geographical location for this episode is the Sea of Galilee in the northern part of Palestine, most likely near the town of Capernaum. The chronology of the setting is during the second phase of Jesus’ extended ministry in the Roman province of Galilee, where he had been raised since childhood. From the boat, Jesus addressed the large crowds that wanted to hear him speak. As noted above by Donald Senior, the scene shifts from the seashore to a house in [13:36](#) (NRSV): “36 Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying,...” Although not absolutely certain, it very likely was the house where Jesus had been previously, that is mentioned in 13:1 and [12:46-50](#). What isn’t clear is whether or not Jesus had gotten alone with



<http://www.keyway.ca/htm2002/index.htm>

his disciples prior to the reference in 13:36. In 13:10 (NRSV), Matthew says, “Then the disciples came and asked him, ‘Why do you speak to them in parables?’” and is paralleled by [Mark 4:10](#) -- “When he was alone, those who were around him along with the twelve asked him about the parables.” Matthew seems to de-emphasize the Markan stress on when the disciples were the only audience listening to Jesus, perhaps to stress the explanation of the Parable of the Tares to just the disciples. The Matthean concluding narrative statement terminating this episode is

stated clearly in [13:53](#) (NRSV): “When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.” [Mark 4:33-35](#) provides an interpretative base for terminating this episode (NRSV): “33 With many such parables he spoke the word to them, as they were able to hear it; 34 he did not speak to them except in parables, but he explained everything in private to his disciples. 35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, ‘Let us go across to the other side.’” Matthew made use of the Markan interpretative statement in [13:34-35](#) as he wove it into his narrative earlier in the episode: “34 Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. 35 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet: ‘I will open my mouth to speak in parables; I will proclaim what has been hidden from the foundation of the world.’” To be sure, the sequence of events in Matthew differs from that in Mark, as [a comparison of the pericopes](#) reveals:

Matthew

79. [Teaching in parables](#) 13:1-2
80. [Parable of the sower](#) 13:3-9
81. [Purpose of parables](#) 13:10-17
82. [Parable of the sower explained](#) 13:18-23
83. [Parable of the tares](#) 13:24-30
84. [Parable of the mustard seed](#) 13:31-32
85. [Parable of the leaven](#) 13:33
86. [Use of parables](#) 13:34-35
87. [Parable of the tares explained](#) 13:36-43
88. [Parable of the buried treasure](#) 13:44
89. [Parable of the costly pearl](#) 13:45-46
90. [Parable of the net](#) 13:47-50

Mark

19. [Teaching in Parables](#) 4:1-2
20. [Parable of the sower](#) 4:3-9
21. [Purpose of parables](#) 4:10-12
22. [Parable of the sower explained](#) 4:13-20
23. [Candle under a bushel](#) 4:21-25
24. [Parable of the seed growing secretly](#) 4:26-29
25. [Parable of the mustard seed](#) 4:30-32
26. [Use of parables](#) 4:33-34
27. [Calming the storm](#) 4:35-41
28. [Gadarene demoniac healed](#) 5:1-20
29. [Ruler's daughter and a woman healed](#) 5:21-43

Luke

46. [Parable of the sower](#) 8:4-8
47. [Purpose of parables](#) 8:9-10
48. [Parable of the sower explained](#) 8:11-15
49. [Candle under a bushel](#) 8:16-18
50. [True kinship](#) 8:19-21
51. [Calming the storm](#) 8:22-25
52. [Gadarene demoniac healed](#) 8:26-39
53. [Ruler's daughter and a woman healed](#) 8:40-56
54. [Twelve sent out in Galilee](#) 9:1-6
55. [John's death](#) 9:7-9
56. [5,000 fed](#) 9:10-17

- | | |
|---|---|
| 91. Parable of the householder 13:51-52 | 30. Rejection at Nazareth 6:1-6 |
| 92. Rejection at Nazareth 13:53-58 | 31. Twelve sent out into Galilee 6:7-13 |
| 93. John's death 14:1-12 | 32. John's death 6:14-29 |
| 94. 5,000 fed 14:13-21 | 33. 5,000 fed 6:30-44 |

Matthew inserts the **Rejection at Nazareth** (#92) as the next episode, while Mark has the **Calming the Storm** (#27) as the next episode. Luke pretty much follows the Markan sequence here. This emphasizes the distinctive approach of each gospel writer, and how each made use of his sources, especially how Matthew and Luke made use of Mark as one of their sources.

Most scholars conclude, from such detailed analysis of the gospel texts, that one has great difficulty knowing the precise sequence of events that took place in the life of Jesus. Because of what we note here as but a sampling of the challenges in listing out all the pericopes in all four gospels and then trying to line them up sequentially, the conclusion is

widespread and well grounded that one must paint the chronology of Jesus with broad brush strokes, not with fine details. The extreme reaction of a century or more ago (the response to the so-called first quest for the historical Jesus of the late 1800s), that the only conclusion to be reached by a modern historian is that no one knows whether or not Jesus ever lived, is not held by many scholars today. But, on the other side of the spectrum, few will attempt to harmonize the gospel accounts into a detailed Harmony of the Gospels that was popular in the early 1900s. One good internet gateway into several sources for additional study is Mark Goodacre's [New Testament Gateway](#).

b. Literary

Genre. The literary aspects of Mt. 13 begin with a consideration of a parable as **a literary form**, i.e. genre. This teaching device was commonly used in the ancient world, especially among Jews. Thus, the use of it by Jesus was not unusual, and would have been a familiar way to communicate religious truth to the Jewish audiences of Jesus' day. The old VBS definition of a parable, "earthly story with a heavenly meaning," is basically on target but can oversimplify the nature of parables as found in the ancient world. At the heart of both the Hebrew term *mashal* (משל) and the Greek terms *parabole* (παραβολή) and *paroimia* (παροιμία) is the idea of comparison. "This is like that" is the foundational formula for what has come to be called a parable.

The "this" segment refers to the spiritual truth intended by the comparison. In the [Matthean formula introduction](#) to many of Jesus' parables, the phrase begins "The Kingdom of Heaven is like..." This phrase is equal to the similar phrase "the Kingdom of God is like...", used by Luke four times in his [collection of parables](#) in Luke 13:18, 19, 20, 21. Both the Greek adjective *homoios* (ὁμοίος; "like") and the Greek verb *homoioo* (ὁμοιόω; "compares to") are used by Matthew and Luke especially to introduce many of the parables.

The central point of all of Jesus' parables is the [Kingdom of God](#). Although in a few instances this emphasis is indirect rather than stated directly, the theme is still present. Thus any legitimate interpretation of any parable of Jesus will stress some as-

pect of God's rule both in this world and in the world to come. One important side note: the Kingdom of God is not the same as the church, either in this world nor the world to come. Such mistaken identification has led to horrible theological distortion of the teachings of Jesus not only in Roman Catholic tradition, but in Protestantism as well. Those who are the saved participate in the Kingdom of God, and only as baptized members of a community of believers. But the two cannot be equated with one another. Hopefully the church is where God's rule is most evident in this world.

Some additional interpretative steps are necessitated by this distinctive literary form. Some of these are laid out in detail in my [Exegeting Parables](#) page at Cranfordville.com. Four particular areas of analysis become important for correct interpretation of a parable, as explained in this article:

1. DETERMINE THE TERTIUM COMPARATIONIS OF THE PARABLE.
2. DETERMINE THE PROPER CLASSIFICATION OF THE PARABLE.
3. DETERMINE THE SITZ IM LEBEN OF THE PARABLE.
4. DETERMINE THE PROPER GROUPING OF THE PARABLE.

These four areas don't necessarily need to be considered in a step 1, 2, 3, 4 sequence, but these aspects do need to be incorporated into the interpretative process.

Identifying the particulars of the spiritual side of the comparison is the real challenge, as well as be-

ing at the heart of the interpretative process. Modern parable study has affirmed a basic principle called the *tertium comparationis* (point of the comparison); see Step 1 in [Exegeting Parables](#). Early on in the modern era, the tendency was to limit very strictly the boundaries of the essential point of each parable, but more recent work tends to see this essential point as foundational with room for a greater range of possible meanings that can grow off this foundational point. This leads to the next consideration: the ancient levels of meaning given to the parable; see Step 3 in [Exegeting Parables](#). The parable had an initial meaning in the historical situation of Jesus' teaching (*Sitz im Leben Jesu*). This provided a basis for early Christianity to apply the parable to various situations in the subsequent decades after Jesus' public ministry (*Sitz im Leben Kirche*). Each gospel writer, writing some thirty to sixty years after Jesus, is going to reflect his own effort at applying the various parables of Jesus to his initially targeted audience. Thus, when the same parable shows up in two or more gospel accounts, one will typically find different details in the parable's content, as well as differing arrangements of some of the same details. Since our parables are unique to the Gospel of Matthew, such a comparison is not possible. Therefore the identification of the *Sitz im Leben Kirche* is more difficult, but not impossible.

The "is like" segment implies several things. For one thing, how much detail is provided in the source comparison? Parables come in different lengths; see Step 2 in [Exegeting Parables](#). They range in the ancient world from very short proverbs and sayings to lengthy stories. Modern scholars have grouped these into three categories: a) Parabolic Sayings; b) Simple Parables; c) Narrative Parables. Each category of detail carries with it distinctive traits that are important to the interpretative process. The parables in our passage range from a) Parabolic Sayings to b) Simple Parables. The first three (vv. 44-50) exhibit

the usual Simple Parable traits. But the last (v. 52) has the tone of a proverb.

Typically, especially in the parables of Jesus, the "that" segment comes from some aspect of daily life in ancient Palestine. Identifying the source of that daily life segment is helpful. Most scholars have identified four types of sources of materials for comparison (Step 4 in [Exegeting Parables](#)): a) Nature Parables; b) Discovery Parables; c) Contrast Parables; d) A fortiori Parables. The parables in our passage fall in the Discovery Parables group. Very important to the interpretative process then is the exploration of the background of this type of parabolic material in the ancient world in general, and in the New Testament in particular.

Literary Context. The literary setting of the parables has several levels. In the public ministry of Jesus, these parables come in the Matthean narrative structure in the second major period of ministry in Galilee; see my [Survey of Jesus' Parables](#) at Cranfordville.com for details. Of the 85 identified parables of Jesus, these parables stand as numbers 88, 89, 90 and 91. The first period of Galilean ministry saw the use of parables 1-26, while this second period contains parables 27-38, and the final period of Galilean ministry has parables 39-43. Hidden in these details is the reality that during the year of popularity (first Galilean period) Jesus made extensive use of parables in his teaching ministry, but as opposition to him arose and more time was spent with just the Twelve, less parables were used. Then, as he moved toward Jerusalem and crucifixion the use of parables increased with parables 44-85 coming during these concluding months of his earthly life.

The next level of literary setting has to do with the Matthean structure for chapter thirteen. This chapter becomes [the third of five discourses](#) in Matthew's gospel, as the outline below illustrates:

The Prologue Matt. 1-2

Book One: The Son begins to proclaim the Kingdom Matt. 3:1-7:29

Narrative: Beginnings of the ministry Matt. 3:1-4:25

Discourse: The Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5:1-7:29

Book Two: The mission of Jesus and his disciples in Galilee Matt. 8:1-11:1

Narrative: The cycle of nine miracle stories Matt. 8:1-9:38

Discourse: The mission, past and future Matt. 10:1-11:1

Book Three: Jesus meets opposition from Israel Matt. 11:2-13:53

Narrative: Jesus disputes with Israel and condemns it Matt. 11:2-12:50

Discourse: Jesus withdraws from Israel into parabolic speech Matt. 13:1-53

Book Four: The Messiah forms his church and prophesies his passion Matt. 13:54-18:35

Narrative: The itinerant Jesus prepares for the church by his deeds Matt. 13:54-17:27

Discourse: Church life and order Matt. 18:1-35
 Book Five: The Messiah and his church on the way to the passion Matt. 19:1-25:46
 Narrative: Jesus leads his disciples to the cross as he confounds his enemies. Matt. 19:1-23:29
 Discourse: The Last Judgment Matt. 24-25
 The Climax: Death-Resurrection Matt. 26-28

As such, this chapter becomes a pivotal turning point in Matthew's story of Jesus. The focus from this point on will be on preparing his disciples for what lay ahead in Jerusalem at Passover. This is probably behind the strong contrast between the public uttering of the parable to the crowds and then the private explanation of the parable's meaning to just the disciples.

Additionally, one needs to explore the [distinctive aspects](#) of Matthew's collection of Jesus' parables

since he drew from a similar collection in Mark, as did also Luke. See [the listing](#) on page 3. Matthew used all of Mark's parables except for one (Mark #24). But more importantly, Matthew added several parables to the Markan list, none of which are in the Lukan list: 83, 85, 87-91. Our parables, 88 - 91, are a part of that material. These additional Matthean parables stress the value and surprised discovery of the Kingdom by select individuals.

II. Message

Literary Structure. These verses in reality are embedded in the larger passage of 13:1-52 as an integral part of this discourse on parables. Unless one gives consideration to [that context](#), accurate understanding is not likely to happen. The internal organization of thoughts is relatively easy to uncover, as is demonstrated in the [Block Diagram](#), [Semantic Diagram](#), and [Exegetical Outline](#) in the larger internet version of this study. The three Simple Parables (vv. 44-50) finish a series of parables set forth by Jesus in Matt. 13:1-50. Verses 51-52 stand as a narrative conclusion to vv. 1-50 in which Jesus pressures the disciples for affirmation that they understood him. This concludes with his declaration of a proverbial saying making application of his teaching to the disciples.

a. A Demanding Treasure, vv. 44-50

Greek NT

<13:44> Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὗρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυπεν, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ ὑπάγει καὶ πωλεῖ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον.

<13:45> Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ ἐμπόρῳ ζητοῦντι καλοὺς μαργαρίτας· <13:46> εὗρὼν δὲ ἓνα πολύτιμον μαργαρίτην ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν καὶ ἠγόρασεν αὐτόν.

<13:47> Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν σαγῇνῃ βληθείσῃ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἐκ παντὸς γένους

NASB

44The 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 all that he has and buys that field.

45Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; 48 and when it was filled, they drew it

NRSV

44The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets

NLT

44The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field – and to get the treasure, too!

45Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a pearl merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. 46When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!

47Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that is thrown into the water and gath-

συναγαγούση· <13:48> ἦν ὅτε ἐπληρώθη ἀναβιβάσαντες ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν καὶ καθίσαντες συνέλεξαν τὰ καλὰ εἰς ἄγην, τὰ δὲ σαπρὰ ἔξω ἔβαλον. <13:49> οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος· ἐξελεύσονται οἱ ἄγγελοι καὶ ἀφοριοῦσιν τοὺς πονηροὺς ἐκ μέσου τῶν δικαίων <13:50> καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.

Notes:

These verses naturally fall into three segments: v. 44; vv. 45-46, vv. 47-50. The standard introduction to a Simple Parable identifies these three parables:

- 1) *The Kingdom of Heaven is like* treasure...
- 2) *The Kingdom of Heaven is like* a merchant.
- 3) *The Kingdom of Heaven is like* a net...

The wording of the Greek text is identical in all three instances: Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν. More literally in English it is *"comparable is the kingdom of Heaven to..."* The same introductory expression introduces the parables of the tares (v. 24), of the mustard seed (v. 31), of leaven (v. 33), and of the vineyard (Mt. 20:1). The saying in v. 52 alters the introductory formula slightly to τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὁμοίός ἐστιν...

The key element in this is the Greek adjective ὁμοίος. The idea of something being comparable to something else is the core concept. On one side of the comparison is the Kingdom of Heaven. The phrase, ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν, is distinctive to Matthew's gospel. In [those places](#) where Mark and/or Luke refer to the same thing, their expression is uniformly ἡ βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ ("the Kingdom of God"). Matthew will also use the phrase "Kingdom of God" [some five times](#), while he uses "Kingdom of Heaven" [thirty one times](#). Even a casual study of the uses underscores that the two terms are synonymous with each other, and not referring to different entities, as some maintain. Matthew's preference for "Kingdom of Heaven" is a part of his Jewish tendency to shy away from direct references to God. Also to be noted is that the plural form, οὐρανῶν (=Heavens), is used by Matthew reflecting the Hebrew "plural of majesty" even in indirect references to God, since most all the Hebrew words for God occur in the plural rather

up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

ers fish of every kind. 48 When the net is full, they drag it up onto the shore, sit down, sort the good fish into crates, and throw the bad ones away. 49 That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the godly, 50 throwing the wicked into the fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

than singular form.

Central to all of Jesus' teaching, particularly in the synoptic gospels, is the Kingdom of God. Yet, in the history of interpretation the notion of the Kingdom of God has varied greatly. Eric J. Sharpe ("Kingdom of God," *Westminster Dictionary of Christian Theology*, iPreach) provides a helpful synopsis of this history:

The centrality of the idea of the kingdom of God (in Matthew, 'the kingdom of heaven') in the teaching of Jesus is beyond all question: 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand' (Mark 1:15); 'But if it is by the finger of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you' (Luke 11:20); '... the kingdom of God is in the midst of you' (Luke 17:21); '... know that when you see these things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near' (Luke 21:31). The kingly rule of God is certainly present in the person of the King-Messiah; but it will be fully manifested only at the end of time.

The tension between the present ('already now') and future ('not yet') aspects of the kingdom has been reflected in almost every period of Christian history. Often the tendency has been to opt for the one rather than the other. Often, too, the use of the term 'the kingdom of God' has been a means of speaking of a Christian theology of history.

The early church expected the final manifestation of the kingdom in the very near future (cf. Mark 9:1); but as this original hope waned, the kingdom came to be identified either with the visible church itself, or with the rule of Christ over the individual believer. It was in opposition to the former interpretation that the Reformers stressed that the kingdom is not identical with any organization. To Luther it was synonymous with the realm of divine grace, while Calvin saw it as in part embodied in a theocratic* society, in the establishment of which individuals

might play an active part under God. There were the seeds here of later controversy among Protestants.

The point at issue was whether individual Christians might work toward the coming of the kingdom, or whether it remains wholly in God's hands as a gift of grace. Pietists and Evangelicals linked 'the extension of the kingdom' with evangelistic and missionary work (cf. Mt. 24:14), believing every convert to be a new citizen of 'the kingdom of Christ'. A further theological element was introduced by Kant, Schleiermacher and Ritschl, who saw the kingdom as the realm of ideal human relations on earth, and therefore as an ideal Christian society. This opened the way for a secularization* of the kingdom idea in terms of notions of progress, development, evolution and material prosperity. This dominated liberal theology* down to the 1930s. In the USA the 'Social Gospel' was very largely a practical kingdom theology.

Beginning in about 1900, German Lutheran theologians criticized this 'Anglo-Saxon', 'Calvinist' view of the kingdom bitterly and often. Their reasons were partly political and partly theological. Johannes Weiss, Albert Schweitzer and others emphasized that the 'Anglo-Saxon' view was a fruit of the Enlightenment*, and not of the Bible, and stressed the eschatological aspect of the teaching of Jesus*. At first this was mainly a historical exercise, but the disasters of the later war years (post-1917) for Germany's part gave force to eschatological interpretations over against evolutionary idealism.

Between the wars there were repeated confrontations on this issue, beginning at the Stockholm 'Life and Work' conference of 1925. During the 1930s the eschatological interpretation was further strengthened by the progressive collapse of idealism, by economic crisis, by the witness of dialectical and neo-orthodox theologians, and by the findings of 'biblical theology'*. However, the notion of 'bringing in the kingdom' survived in liberal circles, and in popular piety, chiefly in the English-speaking world. But by the later 1950s and 1960s, virtually the only acceptable interpretation of the kingdom of God among Protestant scholars was eschatological in character.

Since the mid-1960s, however, the notion of the kingdom of God as an ideal society, characterized by equality, justice and truth, has once more been gaining ground, partly due to a fresh injection of ideas from the direction of religio-political socialism. This newer form of kingdom theology is closely allied to various theologies of liberation*, though it has deep roots in a tradition of Christian Socialism reaching back at least to the mid-nineteenth

century. It has been expressed repeatedly in recent years, not least at the Melbourne 'Your Kingdom Come' conference of 1980. As in earlier phases, this latest wave of socio-ethical kingdom theology has aroused opposition from Conservative Evangelical and (Lutheran) confessional groups.

In evaluating Christian interpretations of the kingdom of God, much depends on what a particular age or school of thought has come to regard as the antithesis of the kingdom, since each interpretation has emerged in opposition to a manifest evil, ranging all the way from slavery in the nineteenth century to transnational companies in the late twentieth. Conservatives still tend to regard the kingdom in its individual and future aspects, liberals in its corporate and present aspects. Thus although the words 'the kingdom of God' remain constant, their content has varied greatly. Often that content has been determined as much by sociological and political as by biblical considerations.

In recent Christian history, the words 'the kingdom of God' have been used repeatedly to provide biblical justification for programmes of social renewal. How far these programmes are related to anything which Jesus may have meant by these words remains a highly controversial issue, on which there is nothing approaching a consensus. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that no historian of theological ideas has yet attempted a comprehensive account of all the varieties of 'kingdom' interpretation in Christian theological writing. Even the

best of the existing literature remains as a rule silent on the wider socio-political issues involved.

The essential idea of kingdom is that someone exerts ruling control. In this instance it is God that rules in control. This spiritual concept proved hard for those in Jesus' day to grasp. The dominating Jewish expectation was that an anointed deliverer (= Messiah) would come from God and reestablish the kingdom of David, thus allowing the expulsion of all non-Jewish elements from the Promised Land. One of the clearest expressions of Jesus' view comes in his response to Pilate's question about whether he claimed to be King of the Jews. In reply Jesus said, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here" (Jhn. 18:36).

The idea of the Kingdom is at once simple and yet profound. As the actualization of God's rule, we



seek to allow Him absolute control over our life. This is the goal of discipleship in this world. But we seek the implementation of that rule not just in our individual life. The further that rule extends in our world, the richer and more blessed is life both individually and in society at large. Thus the spreading of the gospel is key to extending this rule over more of our world. Establishing principles of divine justice and righteousness into society is central as well. This is the “already” present dimension of the Kingdom. The “not yet” future aspect is the certainty that this absolute rule of God is coming at the close of the age so that every knee shall bow before Him in submission and acknowledgement of His rule over all creation.

Here is the spiritual side of the comparison in these three parables.

The other side of the comparison, “the kingdom is like ??,” comes from everyday life in Jesus’ parables. Usually, the reference to some point in daily life is easy to identify, although it often builds on experience in that Jewish world that is very different from similar experiences in our world. Key to correct understanding is to identify as much detail about daily life in first century Palestine, and especially Galilee, as possible. The more details we know here the more confident we can be in our interpretation.

Once we understand both the spiritual and the daily life sides of the comparison, we are ready to build a connecting bridge between the two, the *TERTIUM COMPARATIONIS*.

Several layers of that connecting bridge are present in the biblical text. One begins with an assessment of what Jesus intended at the historical moment of speaking the parable to the original listeners. Then, when possible, some attention needs to be given to how this parable was understood after Jesus spoke it until the time it took fixed form in the written gospels. Early Christians followed normal patterns of that day to make spiritual application of the teachings of Jesus to situations they faced in their lives. Since these teachings were being passed down primarily in oral form, the usual way to apply was to

alter the specific words to make the applicational meaning clear. This assessment of meaning is very hard to do with great confidence. But when multiple versions of the same teaching exist in the gospels some hints at this may be gleaned. The final layer of connecting bridge is any sign of distinctive application tone inserted by the individual gospel writer. Each of the gospel writers had a specific readership in mind when they wrote their gospel in the second half of the first century. These four communities existed in different parts of the Roman Empire and had different spiritual needs. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John sought to make the life and teachings of Jesus clear and relevant to their targeted audience. Once again, the double and triple tradition in the synoptic gospels provides the best clues for understanding this layer of connecting bridge in the parables.

Understanding this is the tricky part, and has proven to be an interpretative disaster through much of Christian history. But the essential goal of reading parables is to find relevant spiritual meaning. With some comprehension of these layers of connecting the spiritual and the earthly aspects, we can build a more stable connecting bridge between the parable and our world today.



The sequencing of these three parables seems to create something of a bridge where the “treasure” leads to the “pearl” and reaches a climax in the “net.” Progression of idea is present here.

Let’s examine each of these parables to see what kind of connecting bridge existed and how we can then build a comparable bridge to our world.

The parable of the treasure is the first: “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” The daily life side depicts some treasure that has been buried in a field. A person finds it but then covers it back up. With great excitement he leaves the field to dispose of all his possessions so that he can then purchase the field and thus claim ownership of the “treasure.” In a world without safe

banking available, people commonly hid valuables in the ground in an effort to secure them. The exact nature of the *θησαυρῶ* is not specified, since it isn't central to the story. It was simply something valuable. How this treasure was uncovered isn't specified either. Often in Christian art, the representation is that of a hired servant plowing the field and making the discovery. Sometimes the setting for how the discovery is made is left less defined, as reflected in the picture to the right. What ever situation occasions the discovery, the individual who does not own the land and thus can't claim ownership of the treasure, does not report it to the owner. Rather, he seeks to round up the necessary means to purchase the land so that the treasure will be his. From our perspective, some ethical issues of honesty arise from such a scenario, and would have also arisen in the first century Jewish tradition. But again, one must see that the ethics of the individual are not the point of the earthly scene. Instead, his all out determination to secure the treasure is the point of this story. And this leads to the connecting bridge: the Kingdom of God is so valuable that we should just as passionately seek to gain it as did this hired servant. Other aspects such as the hiddenness of the Kingdom to most people today may be present in the story. If so, they must be considered very much in the background. The passion of the servant to acquire the treasure with complete personal sacrifice is the story's central point.



For the disciples privately listening to this parable in the house (cf. v. 36), the message had to come through clearly. When they left all to follow Christ, they began a quest for the Kingdom. Jesus' words became assurance that such a quest was seeking after the most prized treasure one could ever discover. For Matthew's Jewish Christian audience in the mid 60s, who were coming under pressure to abandon Christianity in favor to Jewish traditionalism, the message of the parable was similar. The rule of God through Christ in their lives was the greatest of treasures and was worth all their sacrifice to follow the Lord in the face of persecution. This had been the consistent meaning of the parable from the time Jesus spoke it to the time Matthew put it in written expression some three plus decades later. The guiding presence of God through His Spirit in this life will lead to a richness of life not found any other way. Being in the Kingdom is essential to experiencing eternal blessing (Mt. 5:20).

This same connecting bridge remains applicable to us today. Although not clear to most in our world, being under God's control in life is the most prized experience possible in this world. As the exclusive way to eternal blessing, it becomes even more valued. Thus, how greatly should we seek this valued treasure of the Kingdom? Just as passionately as the hired servant, we should be willing to sacrifice everything to gain the Kingdom. This sets the standards high. Such unconditional surrender to God is a common theme in Jesus' teaching, as well as in the rest of the New Testament.

The older I become, and hopefully the more insights into the principles of the scripture I gain, the more I realize the profoundness of this teaching of Jesus. Over the past 65 years my life has been largely centered in Christian experience. I was taken to church soon after being born in 1941 and have continued to be involved with Christians ever since. As I come toward the last decades of my life, looking back over the most prized possessions and experiences of these 65 years, not much thought is required to recognize that knowing that God has guided and led me through life is easily the most valued of all. The richness of life that I've experienced could in no way have been experienced outside of God's leadership! Fortunately, I've not had to face the persecution that Matthew's first readers did. So I've not experienced those profound depths of God's leadership during times of extreme suffering. But I've read of this in other's lives, and have known a few individuals who have experienced such suffering. Their common testimony is that the deeper into suffering one goes the greater the blessing of God's presence and guidance during such times.

Jesus sets the challenge before us. How greatly do we long for God to lead us through life and into eternity? Are we willing to give up everything for His rule in our lives?

The second parable focuses on a merchant discovering a valuable pearl: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it." The earthly side of this story reaches somewhat beyond first century Palestine. From the Babylonian Exile on, many Diaspora Jews be-





came traveling merchants going all over the Mediterranean world making a living by trading goods. But by the beginning of the Christian era, commerce in Palestine grew significantly with merchants passing through and trading their goods. Thus this parable has a hint pointing beyond the disciples' living under God's control while remaining in Palestine. Certainly to Matthew's target audience of Jewish Christians living in the Roman province of Syria this story would have been clear.

The story has some unique features. Pearls (μαργαρίτας > margaritas) were valued more highly than gold in that world. Yet, hyperbole is injected into the story with the point that a seasoned merchant would sell everything he possessed to purchase just one pearl. Such would have been highly unlikely in that world. But that was Jesus' point! The Kingdom is just so valuable that any sensible merchant realizing the vastly superior value of this one pearl would make the all out sacrifice to gain it.

Thus this second parable makes the same essential point as the first one, but does so with more dramatic language. Thus the importance of being under God's rule is heightened to new levels of significance by this parable.

The third parable pushes the value of the Kingdom to an eschatological climax: "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering

fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away." In an abbreviated form, this parable contains its own interpretation (οὕτως): "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The greater details push this parable toward the [Narrative Parable](#) category. But it still retains the typical traits of a Discovery Parable in the Simple Parable form. Additionally, the eschatological final judgment theme of the parable reflects a return to the theme of the Parable of the Tares (13:24-30 with its explanation in vv. 36-43).

The daily life setting reflects a third situation. The first parable was set in farming; the second in trading, and this one in fishing.



Fishermen used nets to catch their load of fish. Once they hauled them into the boat they took them ashore where they separated out the saleable fish from those that couldn't be eaten. This is the daily life scene. But the connecting bridge to the spiritual principle is supplied by the interpretation of the parable in the next two verses (vv. 49-50). The angels

become the fishermen. Their casting nets for fish is the gathering up of all humanity. The sorting out of the fish becomes final eschatological judgment of humanity. The tossing away of the uneatable fish becomes the banishment to eternal damnation of the evil ones (τοὺς πονηροὺς).

This parable with its interpretation takes on some of the same allegorical tones that are found in the explanations of the parables of the sower (vv. 1-9) with its explanation (vv. 18-23) and of the tares (vv. 24-30) with its explanation (vv. 36-43).

Coming as the climax of the three parables on the preciousness of the Kingdom, this one stresses the ultimate value of the Kingdom. It will become the divider determining where humanity spends eternity. The first two parables (treasure and pearl) put primary focus on the present aspect of the Kingdom. But this third one underscores the future aspect of the Kingdom.

That final judgment aspect of God's rule receives major emphasis in Matthew's gospel. Robert A. Peterson ([BEDBT](#)) provides a good summary of Jesus' teaching:

The doctrine of hell ultimately derives from Jesus. He uses images of darkness and separation to communicate God's rejection of unbelievers and their exclusion from his blessed presence (Matt 7:23; 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Luke 13:27-28). Fire imagery signifies the horrible suffering of the unrighteous (Matt 13:40-42, 49-50; 18:8-9; 25:41; Mark 9:44, 48; Luke 16:23-25, 28). It is significant that Jesus uses the "weeping and gnashing of teeth" image to qualify other images: "the fiery furnace" (Matt 13:42,50), darkness and separation (Matt 8:12; 22:13; 25:30; Luke 13:28), and being cut into pieces (Matt 24:51).

Jesus teaches that the suffering of the ungodly in hell is "eternal punishment" (Matt 25:46; cf. John 5:28-29). Pictures of death and destruction speak of the ruin of all that is worthwhile in human existence (Matt 10:28).

For Jesus' disciples the reality of the ultimate defeat of evil and evil people came as good news. It signaled a similar message for Matthew's initial audience. Well should it also be for us today.



The language of the interpretation focuses on the damnation of unbelievers in hell. It also repeats verbatim the earlier language of [vv. 41-42](#) in the explanation of the Tares: "41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, 42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." But there the positive side is stated as well (v. 43): "Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!"

In the history of interpretation a considerable difference in interpretation has centered in the statement in v. 41 of "will collect out of his kingdom". Does this imply that the kingdom (on earth)

means the visible church on earth? With a strong tradition of a territorial church with infant baptism, particularly as found in Europe with the state church traditions, the tendency has been to equate the kingdom here with the visible church. Richard Gardner ([BBCC](#), [iPreach](#)) calls attention to this history:

Of the parables found in Matthew 13, one in particular calls for comment here, because of the way it has fueled the long-standing debate about the nature of the church. This is the parable of the weeds of the field (13:24-30, 36-43). As understood by proponents of a territorial church, the parable portrays the church as a mixed community, where true believers and others are found together like wheat and tares. Calvin writes, for example: "So long as the church is in pilgrimage in this world, the good and sincere will be mixed in it with the bad and the hypocrites" (1972, 2:74-75).

The Anabaptists, however, disputed this interpretation. Calling attention to the way the text itself defines the field of action (cf. v. 38), Menno Simons and others insisted that the mingling of wheat and weeds describes the world, not the church (cf. Menno Simons: 750; Augsburg: 176-177). Jesus' will for the church, they argued, is defined in Matthew 18, which clearly envisions a disciplined community of the faithful. As a review of commentaries on the text reveals, the debate described above is still going on.

The latter interpretative pattern beginning with the

Anabaptists of the sixteenth century is on the correct interpretative track. No where does the NT idea of a church become the basis of any for the European state church models. Neither does it justify the Calvinist tendency to include all whether they have made a serious faith commitment to Christ or not. The error of this pattern is to want to objectify the kingdom with some identifiable earthly entity. Jesus' insistence upon God's rule as a spiritual reality carried out in this world cannot be laid aside. His thoughts are too rich to be reduced down in such a

manner.

The "gathering out" by the angels in both vv. 41 and 49 means the dividing out of the righteous and the evil at the close of human history in final judgment. [Matt. 25:31-46](#), using some of this same language, makes this clear. Thus the series of seven parables in Matthew 13 comes to its climax with a warning that the Kingdom, the rule of God, ultimately means separation and banishment into damnation of those who reject God's rule over their lives.

b. A Necessary Understanding, vv. 51-52

Greek NT

<13:51> Συνήκατε ταῦτα πάντα; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ναί. <13:52> ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὁμοίός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότῃ, ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιά.

NASB

51Have you understood all these things? They said to Him, "Yes." 52And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

NRSV

51Have you understood all this? They answered, "Yes." 52And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

NLT

51Do you understand? "Yes," they said, "we do." 52 Then he added, "Every teacher of religious law who has become a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a person who brings out of the storehouse the new teachings as well as the old."

Notes:

This narrative conclusion stands as the final segment not of verses 44-52, but of verses 1-52. More precisely it brings to a close the private discussion between Jesus and his disciples introduced in v. 36. Thus verses 36 through 52 form a dialogue, i.e., a conversation, between Jesus and his disciples.

In this final section, Jesus asks his disciples a question; they answer him; and he responds with an applicational saying affirming their responsibility as future teachers of his message.

First, Jesus asked his disciples whether they understood "all these things." The first reference of "all these things" (ταῦτα πάντα) goes back to what he has said in the private conversation with just the disciples. The dialogue began with the disciples expressing lack of understanding (v. 36): "And his disciples approached him, saying, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.'" After providing not only an explanation of this parable given to the crowds publicly, more material is taught them. At the close, he naturally asks whether they have understood. Their reply is "Yes." What wasn't understood is now understood.

The concluding declaration comes in the form of a parabolic saying. A new kind of Christian scribe

now is to arise who understands the Kingdom and accurately interprets it to others, as Donald Hagner (WBC, Logos Systems) describes:

The γραμματεὺς, "scribe," in Judaism was the Scripture scholar-teacher trained in the interpretation of the Torah (cf. *Orton*). The scribe is described in Sir 39:2-3 as one who not only "will seek out the wisdom of all the ancients" but also as one who will "penetrate the subtleties of parables" and "be at home with the obscurities of parables." Jesus refers to a new kind of scribe, one instructed (μαθητευθεὶς, lit. "having been made a disciple") τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν, "in the kingdom of heaven," i.e., concerning the nature of the kingdom as it has been elucidated through the parables. He thus has in mind the disciples whom he has been teaching (and not specialist theologians, *pace Luz*).

The challenge to the Twelve was to interpret the Kingdom correctly to others who in turn would correctly interpret to those coming behind them. This process is still at work and is as essential in our day as it was when Jesus first spoke these words. The old, timeless truths need new applications to changing worlds and spiritual situations in successive generations of disciples.

Greek NT

<13:44> Ὅμοια ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὐρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυψεν, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ ὑπάγει καὶ πωλεῖ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον.

<13:45> Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ ἐμπόρῳ ζητοῦντι καλοὺς μαργαρίτας· <13:46> εὐρὼν δὲ ἓνα πολύτιμον μαργαρίτην ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν καὶ ἠγόρασεν αὐτόν.

<13:47> Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν σαγήνῃ βληθείσῃ εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ ἐκ παντὸς γένους συναγαγούσῃ· <13:48> ἦν ὅτε ἐπληρώθη ἀναβιβάσαντες ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν καὶ καθίσαντες συνέλεξαν τὰ καλὰ εἰς ἄγγῃ, τὰ δὲ σαπρὰ ἔξω ἔβαλον. <13:49> οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος· ἐξελεύσονται οἱ ἄγγελοι καὶ ἀφοριοῦσιν τοὺς πονηροὺς ἐκ μέσου τῶν δικαίων <13:50> καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.

<13:51> Συνήκατε ταῦτα πάντα; λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ναί. <13:52> ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Διὰ τοῦτο πᾶς γραμματεὺς μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν ὁμοίός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδεσπότη, ὅστις ἐκβάλλει ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ καινὰ καὶ παλαιά.

NASB

44The 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 all that he has and buys that field.

45Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, 46 and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind; 48 and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away. 49 So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, 50 and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51Have you understood all these things? They said to Him, "Yes." 52And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

NRSV

44The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

45Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; 46 on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

47Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; 48 when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51Have you understood all this? They answered, "Yes." 52And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

NLT

44The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field – and to get the treasure, too!

45Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a pearl merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. 46When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!

47Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a fishing net that is thrown into the water and gathers fish of every kind. 48 When the net is full, they drag it up onto the shore, sit down, sort the good fish into crates, and throw the bad ones away. 49 That is the way it will be at the end of the world. The angels will come and separate the wicked people from the godly, 50 throwing the wicked into the fire. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

51Do you understand? "Yes," they said, "we do." 52 Then he added, "Every teacher of religious law who has become a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a person who brings out of the storehouse the new teachings as well as the old."

Greek NT Diagrammed

1 ⁴⁴ Ὅμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν
 θησαυρῷ
 κεκρυμμένῳ
 ἐν τῷ ἄγρῳ,
 ὃν εὐρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυψεν,
 καὶ
 ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ
 2 **ὑπάγει**
 καὶ
 3 **πωλεῖ** πάντα
 ὅσα **ἔχει**
 καὶ
 4 **ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον.**

⁴⁵ Πάλιν

5 **ὅμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν**
 ἀνθρώπῳ
 ἐμπόρῳ
 ζητοῦντι καλοὺς μαργαρίτας·
 46 δὲ
 εὐρὼν ἓνα πολὺτιμον μαργαρίτην
 ἀπελθὼν
 6 **πέπρακεν** πάντα
 ὅσα **εἶχεν**
 καὶ
 7 **ἡγόρασεν αὐτόν.**

⁴⁷ Πάλιν

8 **ὅμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν**
 σαγήνῃ
 βληθείσῃ
 εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν
 καὶ
 ἐκ παντὸς γένους
 συναγαγούσῃ·
 48 ἦν...συνέλεξαν τὰ καλὰ
 ὅτε ἐπληρώθη
 ἀναβιβάσαντες
 ἐπὶ τὸν αἰγιαλὸν
 καὶ
 καθίσαντες
 εἰς ἄγγῃ,
 δὲ
 τὰ σαπρὰ ἔξω ἔβαλον.
 9 οὕτως
 9 **ἔσται**
 ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος·
 10 **ἐξελεύσονται οἱ ἄγγελοι**
 καὶ

11 ἀφοριοῦσιν τοὺς πονηροὺς
ἐκ μέσου τῶν δικαίων
50 καὶ
12 βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς
εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός·
13 ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς
καὶ
ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.

14 51 Συνήκατε ταῦτα πάντα;

A λέγουσιν αὐτῷ, Ναί.

52 δὲ
B ὁ εἶπεν αὐτοῖς,

15 Διὰ τοῦτο
πᾶς γραμματεὺς...
μαθητευθεὶς τῇ βασιλείᾳ τῶν οὐρανῶν
...ὅμοιός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ
- οἰκοδεσπότη,
/-----|
ὅστις ἐκβάλλει...καινὰ καὶ παλαιά.
ἐκ τοῦ θησαυροῦ αὐτοῦ



Semantic Diagram

		1	---	1	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	βασιλεία
					καὶ					
I	A	1	a	2	Pres	Act	Ind	3	S	(αὐτός)
					καὶ					
		2	b	3	Pres	Act	Ind	3	S	(αὐτός)
	C				καὶ					
			c	4	Pres	Act	Ind	3	S	(αὐτός)
					(Πόλιν)					
	B	1		5	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	βασιλεία
					δὲ					
			a	6	Perf	Act	Ind	3	S	(αὐτός)
		2	b	7	1Aor	Act	Ind	3	S	(αὐτός)
II	C				(Πόλιν)					
		1		8	Pres	---	Ind	3	S	βασιλεία
			a	9	Fut	---	Ind	3	S	(αὐτό)
	B				---					
			i	10	Fut	Dep	Ind	3	P	ἄγγελοι
					καὶ					
		2	b	11	Fut	Act	Ind	3	P	(ἄγγελοι)
					καὶ					
			iii	12	Fut	Act	Ind	3	P	(ἄγγελοι)
	A				---					
			c	13	Fut	---	Ind	3	S	κλαυθμός . . βρυγμός

II	B			14	Perf	Act	Ind	2	P	(ὕμεῖς)
					δὲ					
II	B			15	2Aor	Act	Ind	3	S	ὁ

Exegetical Outline

I. (1-13) The Kingdom of God is both valuable and demanding.

A. (1-4) The Kingdom is worth sacrificing everything in order to gain access to it.

1. (1) The Kingdom compares to a treasure
2. (2-4) The one discovering the treasure sacrifices everything to gain access to it.
 - a) (2) The discoverer leaves its location
 - b) (3) He sells everything he possesses
 - c) (4) He buys the field where the treasure is.

B. (5-7) The Kingdom is worth sacrificing everything in order to secure it.

1. (5) The Kingdom compares to a merchant man searching for pearls
2. (6-7) The merchant sells everything in order to purchase the beautiful pearl
 - a) (6) Upon finding a beautiful one he sells everything he possesses
 - b) (7) He buys the beautiful pearl

C. (8-13) The Kingdom will bring separation of those who are evil.

1. (8) The Kingdom compares to a fishing net.
2. (9-13) The eschatological end will compare to fishermen getting rid of bad fish.
 - a) (9) The end of the age will be like the fishermen sorting out their catch.
 - b) 10-12) At the end angels will get rid of those who are evil.
 - i) (10) Angels will come
 - ii) (11) They will separate out those who are evil
 - iii) (12) They will toss them into the furnace of fire.
 - c) (13) Weeping and gnashing of teeth will be the fate of the evil ones.

II. (14-15) Jesus concluded this session on parables with a question and admonition.

A. (14) The disciples affirmed their understanding of Jesus' teaching when he asked them.

B. (15) Jesus concluded with a parable asserting the wisdom of the scribe.