

Introduction:

- Mark 4 and Matthew 13 contain the parable which sets forth the “mysteries/secrets NLT” of the Kingdom.
- “A parable is a story drawn from the everyday experience of the people which is designed to illustrate the central truth of our Lord’s message. The central truth of this series of parable is called the ‘mystery’ of the Kingdom.” G.E. Ladd; Gospel of the Kingdom.
- Parables conceal the mystery of the ‘divine rule’ from all but the disciples, who are also taught in parables but given understanding. Mysteries are the facts of the coming of the kingdom, which only faith can grasp.
- “Here is the Biblical idea of mystery: something which has been kept secret through times eternal but is now disclosed. It is a divine purpose which God has designated from eternity but has kept hidden from men.” G.E. Ladd; *ibid*. It is ‘mystery’ that Jesus uses to draw us into Kingdom rule!

I. The Coming Kingdom Daniel 2:31-35, 44-45

A. Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar’s dream. Note: 2:28 and 29 speaks of the God who reveals secrets or mysteries.

1. The Kingdom is now and it is coming. IE. Huge shining statue of a man. Gold, silver, bronze, iron, clay. A rock cut from a mountain but not by human hands strikes the statue and it falls into tiny pieces that are blown away by the wind and the cut stone becomes a great mountain that covers the whole earth.
2. “During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever. That is the meaning of the rock cut from the mountain, though not by human hands, that crushed to pieces the statue of iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God was showing the king what will happen in the future. The dream is true, and its meaning is certain.” (Daniel 2:44-45, NLT)
 - a) A Kingdom set up by God.
 - b) A Kingdom that will never be destroyed.
 - c) A Kingdom that will stand forever.
3. It is a mystery when God gives a clear word but with a foggy time line (How will He do that?), or documentation with some parts yet unknown. That is a mystery. It is a mystery when you have a clear word but a contrary experience. Note to self: that does not nullify the word of God.
4. This mystery that Daniel is privy to has been from before time. Has been spoken of powerfully, ie. “David’s kingdom will be one forever.” Yet David’s kingdom is split. The City of David sacked and the people taken away. If you are of David’s family, “How does that work?”
5. Nebuchadnezzar hears that this Kingdom is both here and coming!

B. Daniel 2:44-45 now becomes the Hope of Israel!

1. Now enter the scene: Jesus of Nazareth, of the lineage of David, born King of the Jews! Miracle worker, preacher like never heard before, confronter of demons and Pharisees! This Jesus announces that the Kingdom of Heaven is here! The rule of God is here. With this kind of power being thrown around you would think: MESSIAH! He will deliver us and usher in the eternal reign of the Jews!

2. The prophet has announced the future! It is now and it is future! Now because it is spoken and it is real. Future because it is coming. In that day when God sets up His reign it will brake all other earthly reigns and bring down the proud which oppose God. God alone will be King!
3. Now go to Mt 3. Johns the Baptist speaks of fire that will come though Messiah. It is two fold:
 - a) Some will receive the baptism of Holy Spirit and fire.
 - b) Others will receive the final judgement which will result in destruction by unquenchable fire.
4. John, now in prison, sends messengers to Jesus to ask if He is the One. Many preach this as his doubt and loss of confidence. But Jesus praises him! So that probably is not the case. Johns issue is this: Jesus is not acting like the Messiah that John announced. Where was the baptism of the Spirit? Where was the judgment of the wicked? Jesus answers John in Mt 11:6 **"And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."** What did He mean? "Hang on John! It is not how you expected it!" The Kingdom is here but instead of making changes in the political order it is making changes in the spiritual order and in the hearts and lives of people.
5. This is the mystery of the Kingdom (The rule of God): The Kingdom is yet to come as Daniel said, but it is also here now to work among men in a most utterly unexpected way!
 - a) It is not destroying human rule. It is not abolishing sin from the earth.
 - b) It has come quietly and mysteriously. It can work among men and never be seen in a crowd.
 - IE. I never heard of Kathryn Kuhlman, yet she had one of the most powerful healing ministries of the late 20th century. It was at work but unnoticed.

II. The Mystery of the Kingdom **"He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not."** (Matthew 13:11, NLT)

- A. Here is the message of the parables of Matthew 13. The mystery of the Kingdom, the rule of God, is that the Kingdom which is to come in power and great glory is actually present among men, now, in an unexpected way to bring men in this present evil age the blessings of the Age to come. This is Jesus answer to John the Baptist. And it is His teaching to the disciples that they might understand what God is doing now. Let's examine the parables in light of this truth.
- B. The parables:
 1. Parable of the sower. The mystery of the Kingdom is this: The Kingdom of God is here but not with irresistible power. The Kingdom of God has come in power but it is not like the stone grinding an image into powder. It is the opposite: It is like a man sowing seed. It is not destroying to rule but blessing/giving life to rule. It does not force itself upon men.
 - a) Path - hard, birds eat the seed.
 - b) Rocks - fast growth but no root in time of pressure.
 - c) Weeds - grows up but is choked out by weeds.
 - d) The mystery of the Kingdom is this: The Kingdom of God, or the rule of God has come to men yet men can reject it. Not all will receive it! This was huge to all who knew Daniel and his prophetic word! Daniel said, "Who can resist it? Who can with stand it? Yet Jesus says it can be rejected and resisted.
 - (1) Yes the Kingdom or rule of God is here.
 - (2) But God will not compel people to bow before it. They must receive it. The response must come from a willing heart.

- e) Application: God will not drive people into His Kingdom. It is not the business of those in ministry to drive people in the Kingdom. We preach, share, implore, compel but we do not drive, command or demand. Life is in the seed/Word.
2. Parable of wheat and weeds. The world is the field. And both must grow together until the time of harvest, end of the age. Then the separation will come. That is why we are told to be in the world but not part of it. In Daniel when the Kingdom comes it destroys wickedness and sin. Jesus taught:
 - a) The Kingdom has come but the wicked age still continues.
 - b) The Kingdom has come but the wicked and righteous must live together until the coming of the Son of Man.
 - c) To those who knew Daniels prophecy this was shocking!
 3. This character is further seen in the parables of the mustard seed and leaven.
 - a) The mustard seed reveals that the Kingdom of God is present among men in a form not previously revealed. Even though it is tiny, insignificant, it is still the Kingdom of God! Don't be discourage! The time will come when this same Kingdom of God will not be a tiny seed but a huge tree! Visible to all.
 - b) Growth is not the truth in the parable. Yes it is a message that can be preached. But Jesus is not teaching that the Gospel will eventually take over all the world. Nor is he teaching that the yeast is evil.
 - c) He is teaching that the Kingdom is here. It is not what you expected. But do not let its 'insignificance' cause you to despise it. Zechariah said, "**Do not despise small beginnings.**" Zech 4:10
 4. In a parable there is one truth. It is a story taken from life to illustrate a point. Allegories are stories made up from the imagination that can have multiple truths in them. People can teach from parable in a topical way but we must always give the one main truth of parable. Don't read too much into the details of a parable.
 5. Parable of the leaven. Again, Jesus teaches the same point as the mustard seed. The yeast represents the insignificance of the Kingdom but do not be discourage by that. The dough swallows up the leaven so that one is hardly aware of its presence.
 - a) In stead of the glory of God shaking the earth, the Kingdom (rule of God) has come in One who is meek and lowly. One who is destined to die. One who has but a few disciple.
 - b) No wonder Roman history has so little to say about Jesus and His mission. It can just be ignored.
 - c) But do not be deceived, one day this Jesus will come in power and grind the rule of men to powered scattered by the wind. Don't be deceived even Caesar had believers in his house.
 - d) The parable of mustard seed and the yeast, illustrate the fact that the Kingdom of God may sometimes seem to be a small insignificant thing. The world may despise and reject it. But the day will come when the Kingdom comes in power and covers the whole earth!
 6. The Parable to the treasure and pearl. Here is the mystery: The Kingdom of God is like a tiny seed or a little bit of yeast. Even though it is insignificant it is the Kingdom of God and therefore is of a great value that cant be estimated.

- a) Even though the rule of God comes to men in such humble form, this rule is like a treasure of infinite value. It is like a pearl that merits the loss of everything to get it!
 - b) This parable does not tell us that salvation can be bought. It is teaching us that the rule of God is worth our very lives!
 - c) Yes, the Kingdom of God is free but it cost us everything to get it. Jesus is the King of the Kingdom. If He is Lord they He possesses all of our life!
7. Parable of the net. The Kingdom comes to all people! **It is Gods will that none would perish.** 2 Peter 3:9 All this 'insignificant' 'small' movement of God will come to the end of the age. And like souls of all history angels will sort out the good from the bad.
- a) The wicked will be thrown into the unquenchable fire.
 - b) Do you understand? To which they answer YES! **"Then he added, "Every teacher of religious law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a homeowner who brings from his storeroom new gems of truth as well as old.""** (Matthew 13:52, NLT)

III. What Do We Know?

- A. The life is in the seed/Word. The seed holds the principle of life. We just sow it!
- B. The actual working of the Kingdom of God is God's working.
- C. Here in lies the mystery of the Kingdom: "Before the day of harvest, before the end of the age, God has entered into history in the person of Christ to work among men, to bring them to the life and blessing of His Kingdom." G.E. Ladd, the Gospel of the Kingdom
 1. The Kingdom of God comes humbly, quietly, with shaking mountains, without blazing glory. But that does not mean it is not powerful, or not valuable. In fact it means get it no matter what it costs.
 2. It can be resisted
 3. It can be rejected
 4. But if received it introduces us to the blessing of the rule of God in our lives.
 5. This same Kingdom will be the one that comes at the end of the age and crushes every other worldly government so that all worship Jesus... King of Kings! and Lord of Lords!

Conclusion:

- Don't be discourage by how small the Kingdom appears.
- Jesus is coming in power.
- Today is the day to prepare.