

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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Start audio file 12

Laodicea Part 3

The Kingdom Parables: Matthew 13

3-9 1: Sower & 4 Soils

10-17 Why Parables?

18-23 Sower & 4 Soils Explained

24-30 2: Tares & Wheat

31-32 3: Mustard Seed

33 4: Woman & Leaven

34-35 Why Parables? (continued)

36-43 Tares & Wheat Explained

44 5: Treasure in the Field

45-46 6: Pearl of Great Price

46-50 7: Dragnet

Why Parables?

Matthew 13:10-12

10 The disciples came to him and asked, 'Why do you speak to the people in parables?'

11 He replied, 'Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, **but not to them**. 12 Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them.'

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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The parables are given to those who are spiritually enlightened so you can know the mysteries of the kingdom. (Not for those in the darkness.)

What is He talking about? Spiritual insight.

Matthew 13:13-17 13 *This is why I speak to them in parables:*

'Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

14 In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

*15 For **this people's heart** has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them."*

*16 But blessed are **your** eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. 17 For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*

This people's hearts - the Jews generally

Your eyes - Speaking especially to His disciples

Matthew 13:34, 35 *Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. 35 So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: 'I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.'*

Jesus only spoke to the multitudes in parables (from Chapter 12 on).

These parables contain truths that are hidden from the Old Testament otherwise they would not have been "kept hidden from the foundation of the world" (7 times here: **Matt 25:34; Luke 11:50; Heb 4:3; 9:26; Rev 13:8; 17:8**).

These things that the Lord is talking about in **Matt 13** are first time occasions, not found overtly in other Old Testament books.

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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Hidden Secret?

Ephesians 3:4-6

*4 In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5 which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 6 This mystery is that through the gospel **the Gentiles** are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*

The Church: not just that Gentiles will be converted: that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs and of the same body and partakers of His promise in Christ Jesus by the gospel. From this mystery, we get the insight that these seven parables have the specific focus in the Church.

The Four Soils

Matthew 13:3-9

*... Then he told them many things in parables, saying: 'A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop – a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. 9 **Whoever has ears, let them hear.**'*

Four Soils: Explained

Matthew 13:18-23

'Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 when anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 22 The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. 23 But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.'

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

Student copy

God is the Sower and the seed is His Word. Who are the birds? See v. 19, the evil one takes away the seed; birds are bad in parables. In stony places, there is a little soil but not enough to take root. A little pressure, a little persecution, and they are on to the next fad; there have no roots.

Third, they mean well but they get swept up in the cares of this world. The world makes it's demands on you and the thorns choke out any spiritual fruit

Tares & Wheat

Matthew 13:24-30

Jesus told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and

sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed ears, then the weeds also appeared.

27 'The owner's servants came to him and said, "Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?"

28 "'An enemy did this," he replied. 'The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?"

29 "'No," he answered, "because while you are pulling up the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: first collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

The sower is not necessarily asleep (the Lord never sleeps).

"Tares": Zizania - a seed in Israel today that looks just like wheat while it is growing, but then while it matures it turns black (it shows its true colour). If it gets mixed up in the wheat and you bake bread with it, it is poisonous!

It must be separated out...there will be a separation, a burning of the tares and the wheat into His barn.

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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Tares & Wheat: Explained

Matthew 13:36-43

Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, 'Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field.'

³⁷ He answered, 'The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸ The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, ³⁹ and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

*⁴⁰ 'As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. ⁴¹ The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. ⁴² They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³ Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. **Whoever has ears, let them hear.***

"...end of the age": Found 6 times (v. 39, 40, 47; 24:3; 28:20; Heb 9:26) = Age

of Man. "Who hath an ear..." from Rev 2 & 3; the letters to Seven churches

Mustard Seed

Matthew 13:31, 32

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.'

Mustard seeds grow into bushes about 3 feet tall. Have you ever seen a bird lodge in a small bush? This mustard seed apparently grows to become a monstrosity, something larger than it is supposed to. It becomes a structure so large and spacious that birds come and lodge in the branches. Birds are the birds that picked up the seed in the first parable; the ministers of Satan!

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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Woman & Leaven

Matthew 13:33

.... *He told them still another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about thirty kilograms of flour until it worked all through the dough.'*

Leaven in Jewish terms is a symbol of sin. Ex. Passover ceremony to get the leaven out of the house. Leaven is sin because it corrupts by puffing up. What is the root of all sin? Pride. Whose pride? Satan's (**Isa 14**). Leaven is used as a type of sin throughout the Old Testament and the New (2 times Jesus says, and 2 times Paul says, "...a little leaven leavens the whole lump.")

"Three measures of meal": To an Arab or a Jew, historically this suggests the Oaks at Mamre (**Gen 18**—from that time on, three measures of meal are the fellowship offering.) It is wrong to hide leaven in the measures of meal! The Church will not be perfect, it will be impure. Leaven will be introduced and it will grow and contaminate. These parables are prophecies of the Church age!

Treasure in the Field

Matthew 13:44

.... *'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.'*

This is not saying to sell all and buy Jesus Christ, as Jesus is free gift.

To feel that you can add one thing to that which He has done 100% is arrogance; to assume that you can add to that which God has called complete is blasphemy. The treasure is hidden in the field, or the world (**Ex 19:5; Ps 135** - we are described as His peculiar treasure).

The One that gave up all that He had for the sake of the treasure is Jesus Christ! He wanted the treasure, He didn't buy just one little parcel, He bought the whole field. He died on the cross for all sinners. Who did the buying? He did. What did it cost Him? His Blood. He purchased what? You and I! Who is the treasure hid in the field? You and I are!

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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Pearl of Great Price

Matthew 13:45, 46

... Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Oysters are not kosher; one can only eat seafood with scales. This means that pearls were not prized by the Jewish community. While they might trade in them because they would sell them to the Gentiles, pearls are distinctly a Gentile ornament, not a Jewish ornament. Of all jewels, pearls are the only one that is made by a living organism as a response to irritation that has been introduced. It is then removed from its place of growth to become an item of adornment.

Drag Net

Matthew 13:47, 48

... Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. 48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.

The judgment. Separation of the good and the bad

Drag Net: Explained

Matthew 13:49, 50

This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous 50 and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Student Diligence

Matthew 13:51, 52

Have you understood all these things?' Jesus asked. 'Yes,' they replied.

52 He said to them, 'Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.'

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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"Rightly dividing the Word of Truth," 2 Tim 2:15

The Seven Kingdom Parables Rev. 2 & 3

- The Sower and 4 Soils Ephesus
- The Tares and the Wheat Smyrna
- The Mustard Seed Pergamos
- The Woman & the Leaven Thyatira
- The Treasure in the Field Sardis
- The Pearl of Great Price Philadelphia
- The Dragnet Laodicea

Paul's Epistles to Seven Churches

Paul wrote 13 letters. Three of them are 1st & 2nds, leaving 10 addressees, three of which are pastors: Paul also wrote to seven churches.

Jesus	Paul
1. Ephesus	Ephesus
2. Smyrna	Philippians
3. Pergamos	Corinthians
4. Thyatira	Galatians
5. Sardis	Romans
6. Philadelphia	Thessalonians
7. Laodicea	Colossians

- Ephesus = Ephesians;
- Smyrna ~ Philippians (joy through suffering);
- Pergamos ~ Corinthians (marriage to the world);
- Thyatira ~ Galatians (Religious externalism);
- Sardis ~ Romans (Definitive orthodoxy);
- Philadelphia ~ Thessalonians (The raptured Church);
- Laodicea = Colossians

(only a few miles apart, instructed to trade letters with Laodicea; Greek phrases unique only to these two letters)

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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There follows a look at some of the doctrines and modern heresies going around today that we should be aware of.

The parable of the dragnet.

Jesus shows that the world will remain divided right up until the end, and the Church **will not** reform the world, ushering in the kingdom.

There is an erroneous teaching going around that the Church has to work at changing the world to become a better place because Jesus can't come back until then.

Kingdom Now theology is a branch of dominion theology which has had a following within Pentecostalism. It attracted attention in the late 1980s. Kingdom Now theology states that although Satan has been in control of the world since the Fall, God is looking for people who will help him take back dominion.

1- Double portion services

These are church services in which the preacher promises that every person they lay hands on, or who gives a certain amount of money to them, will receive a double portion of the anointing. However, in only one instance in scripture did a person receive a double portion from another person. In 2 Kings chapter 2, Elisha received a double portion of the spirit that was upon his mentor, Elijah the prophet. However, this was not merely an event but the culmination of years of Elisha following and serving Elijah. When Elijah was taken up, Elisha received that which was rightfully his because of his time faithfully serving and learning from his spiritual father.

Those who teach you can receive a double portion of the anointing or a blessing by merely showing up to a meeting and getting hands laid upon them negate the fact that Elisha left everything to follow Elijah and that this also involved hard arduous work, humility and discipline over a period of time.

2- Hundred-fold Financial Blessing

There are some who teach that if you give a certain amount of money to their ministry you will receive a "hundred-fold" blessing in return. They get this from the passage in Mark 10:29-30 29 "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30 will fail to receive

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields, along with persecutions and in the age to come eternal life.

First of all, Jesus is telling this to His followers who left everything for Him. This is not a promise for someone who only puts money into an offering bucket.

While God does generously bless us back when we give to Him, He was not literally promising a hundredfold financial blessing to every person who gives. The context of this passage was that everyone who leaves their home and their family to minister for Christ will have a hundredfold blessing of receiving countless spiritual fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers and numerous houses where they can stay.

Using this passage as a way to get people to invest money in their ministry is misleading and confusing to people who will most likely never really see a hundredfold return on their giving.

3- Grave sucking

In recent years, there has been a craze in which Christians will go to the grave of a great saint (Like Charles Finney) and lay on top of the grave to get some of the anointing of this departed hero in the faith. This practice comes from a mis-interpretation and application of the passage in 2 Kings 13:21 in which a dead man was accidentally thrown into the grave of Elisha and came back to life after the corpse touched the bones of the great prophet.

First of all, there is no mention in scripture that the man received the anointing of Elisha to minister. Second, there is no mention that the people of God made a ritual out of this practice so other people can be revived and or receive power from the bones of Elisha. This was a one-time miracle that was probably meant to remind and warn Israel as to the veracity and power of the dead prophet's words that were still yet to come to pass.

Charismatics often want a shortcut to the anointing. It is not going to come just because a person lies on a grave, throws a jacket upon you and or lays hands upon you. It comes by waiting upon the Lord, studying His word, seeking His face, and sitting under the mentorship of leaders called to equip you in the work of the ministry.

Biblically, Word of Faith / Prosperity theology is extremely easy to disprove. The apostle Paul was one of Christianity's most devout, loyal, wise, and committed adherents. And yet, he suffered poverty, persecution, and imprisonment (2 Corinthians 11:16-33). Paul actually asked God—more than once—to remove some affliction he was suffering, and God's response was "no" (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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Wolves in Sheep's Clothing - Larry Herneisey

Word of Faith Movement (WoF)

Many Names - positive confession, name it and claim it, hyperfaith and prosperity gospel. (health, wealth and happiness gospel)

EW Kenyon started it (1867 - 1948) with the power of positive thinking doctrine.

With the WoF teaching the main foundational belief is that because God loves us and desires to give us the best of everything all we need to do is ask. God already has everything we need in His heavenly storehouse and is eager to give them to us. "we have not because we ask not" James 4:2 is where this idea comes from. (Taken out of context) Of course when you ask you must have faith or it will not be granted you.

They use the verse John 14:13,14 whatsoever you ask in My Name believing, it will be given you. The WoF teachers emphasise the whatsoever and anything. You will get it if you have enough faith because God can't lie. God can't lie but false teachers can.

One of the big teachings is the Little gods. They point to Genesis 1:26 where it says we are made in the image of God. To them it means we are just like God only smaller, therefore we have the ability to speak things into existence. You must declare it out loud because our words have power. They teach that the spoken word releases some sort of faith force in the universe that causes things to happen. We invoke this force when we speak out our desires and believe that they will come about.

When a teacher takes one or two verses out of context and then makes a complete doctrine out of them, this is heresy. In Genesis 1 we are told that God made each thing after its own kind, therefore when God made man in His own image that we are made after Gods own kind. In other words He made us gods like Himself. So God reproduced other gods. We are of the God kind. The fact that God gave man dominion over the earth reinforces their view that we are gods because we are in charge of things. Because we are gods, we have much of the same power that God has. These teachers will emphasise that we are not God spelt with a capital G but we are little gods spelt with a small g.

Apparently they don't want to use a capital G and be guilty of blasphemy but they are willing to spell it with a small g and only be guilty of heresy.

The scriptures state clearly that God made man in His likeness Gen 1:26-27 but not with His abilities. God did not produce another God, He created a man. Nor was man made with God's essence, but he was created out of the dust of the earth.

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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One of the main assertions of the little gods doctrine is that we can speak things into existence with our words.

They also believe that the evidence of signs and wonders confirm that they are genuine. If you can heal people on stage or in front of a camera then you must be genuine. (Jesus when confronted by people who said, but we have done signs and wonders in the Name of Jesus' replied, "depart from Me I never knew you")

Signs and wonders do not confirm a preachers authenticity.

WoF teach that if you don't get what you have asked for it is down to your lack of faith. Faith is the invisible force to invoke to have your wishes fulfilled. The teaching that faith is the main ingredient to make all our wishes come true, is closely linked to the positive thinking movement.

If there was any truth to the teachings of the Word of Faith movement, Paul would have been healthy and rich, not oppressed. He would have "spoken" his afflictions away. Clearly, this is not what happened. Likewise, there are other instances where Paul was unable to "speak" healing into others, despite his sincere desire ([Philippians 2:25--30](#); [2 Timothy 4:20](#)).

In fact, Paul described those who think of God as a way to get rich as "depraved" and lacking in truth ([1 Timothy 6:5](#)). The verses following this condemnation are the antithesis to the entire Prosperity teaching: that we are to be content with what we have, and a desire for wealth is a dangerous temptation ([1 Timothy 6:6-10](#)).

Job, as well, shows how bankrupt Word of Faith / Prosperity teachings are. The Bible is explicitly clear that Job's calamities were not because of his own sin ([Job 1:8](#)). This is a teaching echoed by Jesus in John chapter 9, where He specifically says that the man born blind was not suffering because of his sin or that of his parents ([John 9:1-3](#)).

Another key event is Jesus' temptation in the wilderness ([Matthew 4:1-11](#)). This is the one and only place in the Bible where material wealth and prosperity is offered in return for worship ([Matthew 4:8-10](#)). However, this offer is not made by God. It's made by the Devil. In other words, it's perfectly accurate to say that the claim, "worship and you'll be wealthy" is literally a message from Satan.

Said another way, there would be no reason for Satan to tempt Jesus with wealth and success, if those are the natural and expected results of faith in God. Jesus was the most perfect person who ever lived—there was no reason for Satan to tempt Him with something if He was guaranteed to get it already! Wealth and privilege are not, in any sense, guaranteed for the believer.

12. Letters to the 7 Churches Rev. ch 3:14-22 Laodicea Part 3

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God does not imbue Christians with the power to have anything we want, whenever we want it. God will grant requests which align with His will. Biblically, we see clear evidence of this. Historically, we see this in the lives of the apostles, who clearly didn't feel God was obligated to give them every whim they asked for. Logically, we see this in the hypocrisy and greed of those who promote the Word of Faith / Prosperity message.

There are many well-meaning people who have been confused by the arguments of Word of Faith teachers (**2 Corinthians 11:3**). The most loving thing we can do for such people is to show them the truth, so they don't waste their efforts, lives, or resources on spiritual con artists.

Next time

The Divine Outline: Revelation 1:19

Write the things which you have seen, (The Vision of Christ, Chapter 1) and the things which are, (The Seven Churches, Chapters 2, 3) and the things which shall be hereafter; (Which follows after the Churches Chapters 4-22).

Rev 4:1

After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, 'Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.'

Next week a look at the Rapture of the Church

"after these things" = meta tauta.

Opens the third, and final, section of the book: chapters 4 to 22.