

Synopsis 013a The Preaching of John the Baptizer Matthew 21:33-43

There are several unifying themes used in these three stories that we read last week. First of all, we see that he baptized a whole bunch of people. He baptized them unto the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. We read about his diet of honey and locusts, as well as his raiment, which was a leather girdle and camel's hair clothing. He came in the power and spirit of Elijah. He didn't spend a lot of time preaching the message of common salvation, because that was something that was already very familiar to the Jews. In all three passages, he fulfilled the words of the prophets.

What else did he do? He was preaching. He was doing a whole lot of preaching, apparently. What was he preaching? Matthew 3:1-2 says, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Repent ye, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand.

He was preaching, "repent!" and he was preaching and proclaiming the Kingdom of the Heavens; "The King is coming!" That's what he taught; that's whom he was the forerunner of.

Even the teaching of the Kingdom was nothing new to the Jews. But, the idea of "repent!" became a stumbling block to many. They thought that as children of Abraham, they had automatic entrance into the Kingdom. But, Abraham had an earthly seed and a heavenly seed, and many people did not realize just how far they had drifted from God's law. They had taken to following man's law, and as such, they needed to change or repent; they needed to reform the way they lived and they needed to change directions. Repent!

[Matthew 21] We have an experience that we're going to look at, which is revolutionary and very enlightening in its teaching. Very few Bible students and teachers who pick up the truth that is in this passage.

The parables of Jesus are very important. These parables have been minimized by the teachers; intimating that there's little truth in a parable and you're going to get in trouble if you read too much into it. It's not a question of reading anything into it; it's getting everything out of it that the Lord has there.

I don't think that the Lord would use a parable or a simile or any other means that isn't truth. You can follow a parable to the remotest point and you won't encounter anything that is untruth. Nothing that our Lord uses is untruth, because he is truth! Whatever he says is the truth.

Here, is a parable. [Matthew 21:33] Get in mind first that what the Lord seeks in his servants and any of his children is fruit. Almost, if not all, of these parables have to do with fruit-bearing and not salvation.

Many teach the parables of Matthew 13 (sower) as, one group is saved and the rest are lost; but all of them in Matthew 13 have to do with fruit-bearing, and all of them have to do with saved people. Fruit-bearing.

[Matthew 21:34] The Judgment Seat of Christ is going to determine the extent of fruit-bearing. When he calls those with the talents, or when he calls those who receive the pound, what he's interested in is, how much fruit have they born? We have been saved to serve; bear fruit. Everlasting life is not the supreme purpose of salvation; serving is.

[Matthew 21:35] The husbandman took the servants of the Lord of the vineyard, beat one, killed another, and stoned another. That's the way the prophets were treated before the time of the Lord.

[Matthew 21:36] That's what we find before the coming of our Lord. [Matthew 21:37] This is the time of the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. [Matthew 21:38-39] They recognized that he was the son. When our Lord prayed from the cross, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do", he was not talking about the leaders of the Jews; they knew who he was; they knew he was the Son of God.

The leaders found themselves in a real pickle; they either had to obey him or they had to shut him up. They weren't about to obey him, because his teaching was diametrically opposed to their teaching, their beliefs, and their convictions. So they determined to kill him or silence him; they knew he was the Son of God and they had to either silence him or obey him.

They chose to shut him up. These husbandmen in this parable knew he was the son of the master of the vineyard and they determined to kill him, and the leaders of the Jews decided to kill the Son of God, and they did. But, they didn't silence him. John 14:16 says, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." The father sent another comforter, and the word "another" means one just like himself.

They sent another comforter exactly like him. That comforter is the Holy Spirit of God. The third member of the God-head. He is as much God as God the Father, and as much God as God the Son. They sent him, and he called to their mind and their remembrance everything that Jesus had said and they were constantly convicted of that.

They took the Lord and killed him to silence him. One of the things that irked them was that he said he was the King of the Jews. They always put a sign on the cross, designating the crime for which someone was crucified. Pilate put, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews". The Jews didn't like that. They went to Pilate and said, "you say, 'He said he was the king of the Jews.'" He was sick and tired of the whole thing, and he shouted at them in Greek, "gegrapha gegrafa"; in no uncertain terms he said, "what I have written, I have written and it's going to stay." Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. They all knew who he was, except for the rabble of the people, and it was of them that he spoke, "forgive them for they know not what they do". The vast

majority of the people didn't know, but the scribes & Pharisees... they knew. So, it stood.

Here, these husbandmen knew this was the son of the owner of the vineyard. They caught him, they cast him out, and they slew him. [Matthew 21:40] What's he going to do unto the husbandmen? [Matthew 21:41; *the* fruits] That took place in 70 AD when the Lord sent Titus and his legions to destroy Jerusalem. They destroyed the temple, which had become the temple of the Jews and no longer the temple of the Lord. It had been a temple of prayer and had become a temple of merchandise. The feast of the Lord had become the feast of the Jews. So, the Lord Jesus Christ sent Titus and he destroyed those people, he destroyed the city; and he scattered the Jews to the four points.

[Matthew 21:42] The reference there, which comes out of tradition (there may be some historical foundation), is that the stone that the builders rejected had become the cornerstone. Some may appreciate the fact that the materials were prepared away from the construction of the structure; all the stones cut; all timbers cut; everything prepared away and when they brought it all together and put the temple together, there was no sound of hammer and saw; no sounds of construction.

As they put it together, they stumbled over a stone and they pushed it away. Others came along and stumbled over it, and they pushed it out of the way. Finally, they pushed it into a ravine and as construction neared completion, the cornerstone was missing. This is all according to tradition. They looked all over for it, and finally, someone remembered it, and they found it covered with vines and grass, and they got it and brought it out and it was the cornerstone. This is a reference to that. "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."

The reference there is of course to the Lord Jesus Christ. We're all precious stones in that building, but he's the chief or corner stone. He's the one that holds everything together. The reference here is to Jesus, who was rejected by man, but made chief cornerstone by God almighty.

[Matthew 21:43] That's the key verse. [Matthew 21:43] That's the key verse of the book of Matthew. Failure to understand that key verse is a failure to understand the gospel to Matthew. The gospel of Matthew is called the gospel of the Kingdom.

From time immemorial, man has used animals to depict the four gospels. Matthew is represented by a Lion; Mark is represented by an Ox; Luke is represented by Man; John is represented by an Eagle. These are the four faces of the cherubim.

The lion is the king of the beasts of the jungle, and Matthew, which is the gospel of the Kingdom, is very appropriately symbolized by the lion.

Mark is characterized the expression "straightway". "And straightway he did this..." "Straightaway he did that..." It's the shortest, but most active and characterized by the work that was done and the ox is the symbol of that.

Luke is the gospel that treats more fully the humanity of our Lord. Luke himself being a physician wrote of the conception and birth. Luke used terms that none of the others used and they were terms that no one but a doctor would or could use. So, man is used to symbolize the gospel of Luke.

John, which is the gospel that soars to heights unattainable by man, is the most incomprehensible of the gospels; it's the deepest, and yet the simplest. If you can grasp that; it's the simplest, yet the most profound of the four gospels. It is symbolized by the eagle that attained heights that were unattained by other fowls.

Matthew is the gospel of the kingdom. Matthew doesn't waste time introducing the King. The wise men in chapter two show up and ask, "Where is he that is born King of the Jews?" Matthew tells of the kingdom of Israel, as a nation to whom the Kingdom was offered.

John showed up at the Jordan and claimed in no uncertain terms, "Repent for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand". The king was at hand; therefore the Kingdom was at hand. "Repent for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand."

Matthew was written for the Jews. To them was offered the Kingdom of the Heavens. John and then the Lord came along, and after his baptism began to proclaim the Kingdom. He sent out the 12 only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. How about the 70? They were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Into the way of Gentiles and Samaritans, don't go; those were their instructions.

So, many people say, this doesn't apply to us. It's written to the Jews. They say that the Sermon on the Mount constitutes the laws that will prevail in the coming Kingdom, and has nothing to do with us now. They don't know that this 43rd verse in Matthew 21 is even in the Bible, and much less that it's in the gospel of Matthew.

[Matthew 21:43] The Kingdom of God is equated with the vineyard that is being talked about in this passage. It's the place where the work is done; where the fruit is borne. That's where the king is reigning in power and glory. The vineyard. Now, I'm going to take it away from you...

The Kingdom of God is God's rule over everything. Everything was created, except for God, and he rules over all of it. That's not what he's taking away. What he's taking away is the offer of their part made to them as a nation.

Some equate the kingdom covenanted to David with the Kingdom of God, but the kingdom covenanted to David is an earthly kingdom and will be peopled and governed by earthly people in their bodies of flesh, blood, and bones. Only the church have the resurrected bodies; only they have bodies like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 11:29 says, “For the gifts and calling of God *are* without repentance.” “Repentance” means a change of mind, and the gifts and calling of God will experience no change of mind. That which God has promised will be fulfilled. If you keep in mind that God’s first purpose with this earth was to people it with people like Adam and Eve would be had they eaten of the tree of life, as they had been commanded to do. That was God’s original purpose.

Their eating of the tree of knowledge and being barred from the Garden of Eden **did not do away with the promise of God**; God is always faithful and it’s not dependent upon us. The gifts and calling are without repentance, and he will yet have the earth populated with people like Adam and Eve would have been if they eaten of the tree of life in their bodies of flesh, blood, and bones.

We read in Revelation of the tree of life by the river and at the leaves of this tree are for the health of the nations of this earth. They in their bodies of flesh, blood, and bones will be preserved. No sickness or illness, because the leaves of this tree will be for keeping them healthy during that time.

The group in Revelation is a different group of people than the church; the church will inherit the Kingdom of the Heavens. David’s kingdom was an earthly kingdom. It had literal boundaries. The Kingdom of the Heavens will be a Kingdom without an end, either chronologically or geographically. Of it, there shall be no end.

John the Baptizer, as God’s messenger, came along and offered the Kingdom of the Heavens. I offer to you the Kingdom of the Heavens. Through faith, you can become a child of God, and through faithful living you can attain an entrance into the Kingdom of the Heavens. A higher position than the earthly kingdom.

The Jew is carnal and worldly and not interested in ruling from the heavens, but in ruling here on earth. They rejected the idea of the Kingdom of the Heavens. They wouldn’t have anything to do with it. It’s kind of like people today when they talk about the pie in the sky; they weren’t interested in something like that; they wanted something concrete; they wanted to rule on the earth where they could plant their feet; they wanted David to come back and rule from his throne there in Jerusalem. They weren’t interested at all in the Kingdom in which the Lord Jesus Christ would be the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and in which the Christians who were faithful and bore fruit in their flesh would get to rule and reign with him. They weren’t interested in it; they rejected it.

The Jew still is not interested. Primarily, because for a Jew to enter in, he has to surrender his identity and become a Christian. Sometimes, we talk about a saved Jew, but a saved Jew is like a saved Gentile. There are three groups of people designated in the Bible: The Jew, the Gentile, and the Church. When a Gentile believes on the Lord Jesus, he becomes a Christian. When a Jew believes on the Lord Jesus, he becomes what? A Christian. No longer Jew or Gentile, but Christians. Do you go around calling yourself a saved Gentile?

The Lord says, I'm going to take that away from you Jews. He did take it. He withdrew his offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens from Israel. He set them aside as a nation. "Now, I'm going to give it to the Gentiles or the nations that bring forth the fruit thereof."

Here's the interesting thing in connection with this: this coming Kingdom, in which Christians can participate is dependent upon bringing forth fruit. Works. A fruitful Christian.

Every branch that beareth fruit, he purges, prunes, and trims; why? In order that it may bring forth more fruit. Every branch that beareth not fruit, he lifts up. 'Airo"; lift up. The KJV translates as "removes", but he doesn't remove it; at least not yet. The picture comes from the vineyard, where the runner on the trestle falls off and gets on the ground and runs out along the ground. The branch on the ground doesn't produce fruit. Every branch on the ground, he lifts up and puts it on the trellis, so that it may bear fruit. But the branch that bears fruit, he purges or prunes.

That's the reason that many Christians don't bear fruit; they hear someone talk about the victorious life or something that appeals to the flesh, so they pray, "Make me fruitful", and so the Lord prunes them. What is pruning? That hurts. They say, "Stop! That hurts! Quit!", and he quits pruning and they don't bear fruit. Now, you're asking for trouble when you ask the Lord to make you fruitful.

Dr. Ironside tells of a story in which a lady came up to him and asked, "Dr. Ironside, please pray that I may have patience".

He said, "Well, let's pray right now: Oh, Lord, we pray that you will send this lady hardship, heartache, and suffering."

"Wait, wait, wait! I said that I wanted patience!" But, what does Romans 5:3 tell us? It tells us that tribulation brings patience.

These things are born of suffering. Fruit-bearing. Every branch that bears fruit he purges. Many think and teach that every branch that didn't bear fruit he began to cut, hack, beat, and to work on. No, it's the one that bears fruit that this is true. Don't think that the Christian who is suffering, is suffering because of some secret sin; it may just be because they are very fruitful. Don't walk around in pride because you're not suffering because you're so good; it may be because you're not fit to suffer for the Lord. The people who need to hear this aren't here, and they won't be here.

But, he's going to give this to the Gentiles (the nations) who will bring forth the fruit thereof. Now, the question arises, "What nation is it?" Here, it says, "the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you..." The gospel of Matthew, which has been written to you, will be taken away and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. The gospel of Matthew is written to any Christian who will bring forth the fruit of the Kingdom. It's written to us; it's written to you and it's written to me.

[1 Peter 2] Do you want to see about this nation? You should always interpret scripture in the light of scripture. A text out of context is a pretext. What's the context of Matthew 21? Well, the context is that which comes before and after. So, the context is from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22:21. That's the context. So, when you go to interpret a passage, you have to interpret it in the light of scripture.

Here in 1 Peter, we have a letter, and when we have a letter, we should see to whom it is addressed. You might avoid difficulty in the future by not reading somebody else's mail. Let's see to whom this is addressed: [1 Peter 1:1-2; scattered – diaspora; because of persecution] These are saved people and no one else and they are the ones to whom this letter is written.

[1 Peter 2:9a; But ye *are* a chosen generation (one), a royal priesthood (two), an holy nation (three), a peculiar people (four)]. There are four designations for this group. This group, or this nation, in this one word, constitutes the body of the Church. This is written to them. We are, every Christian a priest. All Christians constitute a kingdom of Priests.

“A holy nation.” This is the nation that is spoken of in Matthew 21:43. The Kingdom of the Heavens is going to be taken from you and it's given to be given to a nation bringing forth the fruit thereof. This is the nation to which it is delivered.

“A peculiar people.” How many Christians want to be Christians, but not be peculiar? They want to be Christians until everybody thinks they are weird. They want to go where the Word is taught and loved, but don't want it to get out. They might be thought a bit peculiar. A little balmy. Short a few marbles. A few fries short of a Happy Meal. Their elevator doesn't go all the way. A peculiar people.

I'll tell you one thing, if you believe the Scriptures today and you tell it to people, then you will be looked upon as peculiar. “You mean you believe every word in the Bible? You mean you believe God interferes in the lives of men?” Peculiar.

Let's see what it is: [1 Peter 2:9b; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:]

[1 Peter 2:10a; Which in time past *were* not a people] There was a time in the past in which you and I as Gentiles were not a people of God. We walked in darkness, but he has called us into his marvelous light. [Verse 10b; but *are now* [called] the people of God.] Not Israel; now we're called the people of God today. [Verse 10c; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.]

[1 Peter 2:11] We read that because I want to call your attention to important truths of Matthew 21:43. The Kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to the nation [Gentiles] bearing the fruit thereof. When God set Israel aside, he began to call out of the Gentiles a people for his name.

God, for the first time at the house of Cornelius, began to call out of the Gentiles a people for his name, to temporarily take the place of Israel. The nation of Israel had the offer withdrawn from them. Any individual Jew that wants to participate in that through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ can participate, but Israel as a nation cannot because God has withdrawn that offer. It will never again be offered to them. They will be restored to their land, and the kingdom covenanted to David will be established, and David will be raised from the dead to rule on his throne in the city of Jerusalem. That will be accomplished because the gifts and callings of the Lord are without repentance, **but**... but, the Kingdom of the Heavens has been taken from them and it's offered to you and me if we will bring forth the fruits thereof.

So, the gospel of Matthew is the gospel of the Kingdom of the Heavens and the gospel of Matthew is to any Christian who aspires to have a position in the coming Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. That's the key verse of the gospel of Matthew.

When you go to study Matthew, remember that it's written to you and to me, to whom the Kingdom of the Heavens was offered. The Sermon on the Mount has no application to the Millennial reign; it's applicable now, **if** you want to know the laws, the rules, and the regulations to govern the lives of those who would aspire to rule and reign with the Lord.

That's the Sermon on the Mount. It's not talking about what is taking place in the Kingdom. It talks about stealing, adultery, divorce, murder, and all of these things which will not take place during the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. But, they **are** things that are taking place right now!

Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. The Kingdom of the Heavens; that's what all those things are about.

The gospel of Matthew is for you and me and this verse in Matthew 21:43 is the key verse to show you that. Now, go back and study the gospel of Matthew knowing that it's written to you who are saved and that this Kingdom of the Heavens is offered to all of those who will bring for the fruits thereof.