

**“THE KINGDOM OF GOD”**  
**Session 2: “The Mystery of the Kingdom”**  
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**May 8, 2011**

INTRODUCTION

**I. What’s a mystery?**

Romans 16:25-27

*Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, **according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God**, so that all nations might believe and obey him-- to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.*

**A mystery is a divine purpose, hinted at previously and “hidden” to most, but now fully illustrated and explained.**

**II. Some surprise insights which are seen in contrast to common expectations**

**A. Who is the King?**

The Expectation: the King will be an anointed ruler like David

The Mystery: the King will come from Heaven. Emanuel = God with us

**B. What is the Realm?**

The Expectation: Israel. Son of God = Anointed One = King of Israel

The Mystery: All the Nations. Son of Man = King of Humanity = King of kings = Lord of lords.

**C. Who is the Enemy?**

The Expectation: Other nations. People who align with other kings and false gods.  
Human Sovereignty

The Mystery: the enemy is not other people but Satan. Satan’s Sovereignty

The word “devil” does not appear in the Old Testament. Satan is only mentioned briefly three times (in 1 Chronicles 21:1, Job 1:6-9, and Zechariah 3:1-2)

### **The battle is a rescue operation**

John 3:16-17

*"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son (the Anointed Ruler), that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.*

Hebrews 2:14-15

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he (Jesus) too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-- that is, the devil-- and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

### **D. What will it look like when the Kingdom comes?**

The Expectation: Powerfully with conflict and judgment – Israel restored to former glory

The Mystery: A gradual quiet growth among the peoples which will take quite some time, followed by a dramatic appearance at the end.

(See Acts 1:6-11)

### **How Jesus used stories to explain this mystery of how the kingdom comes...**

Matthew 13:34-35

*Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables. This fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet: "I will speak to you in parables. I will explain things hidden since the creation of the world."*

The “Mystery of the Kingdom” is best understood in terms of analogy, story and illustration. But the people listening must have open hearts.

Matthew 13:11-17 says

*<sup>11</sup> Jesus replied [to his disciples], "You are permitted to understand the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not. <sup>12</sup> To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge. But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them. <sup>13</sup> That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don't really see. They hear, but they don't really listen or understand.*

*<sup>14</sup> This fulfills the prophecy of Isaiah that says,  
'When you hear what I say,  
you will not understand.  
When you see what I do,  
you will not comprehend.*

<sup>15</sup> *For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes— so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.*"

<sup>16</sup> *"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. <sup>17</sup> I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but they didn't see it. And they longed to hear what you hear, but they didn't hear it.*

## **Five lessons from the stories of Matthew 13**

### **1. The farmer scattering seed: Matthew 13:1-4, 18-23**

The kingdom is here but it is not with irresistible power. It must be received and take root.

### **2. The wheat and the weeds: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43**

The kingdom has come but evil will still be in our midst up to the end when it is harvest time. The weeds and wheat grow together. The enemy described here is the devil.

### **3. The mustard seed and the yeast: Matthew 13:31-33**

A small seed becomes a large tree, leaven works through the dough by gradual permeation. What seems insignificant now will have great significance later.

Isaiah 6:13

*"As a terebinth or oak tree leaves a stump when it is cut down, so Israel's stump will be a holy seed."*

### **4. The hidden treasure and the pearl: Matthew 13:44-45**

The kingdom has great value, but not everyone appreciates it. It's an investment.

## 5. The fishing net: Matthew 13:47-50

At the end the wicked (sons of the evil one) will be separated from the righteous (sons of the kingdom). But they will be all together up until the time of catching in the nets. It is the same idea as the wheat and weeds story.

*Matthew 13:52*

*“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.”*

### E. How will all this happen?

Genesis 12:1-3

*The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you." I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Galatians 3:7-9

Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

### **This promise was mentioned throughout the Old Testament**

Isaiah 49:6

*"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."*

### **What was not understood was how it would be realized...**

*Ephesians 3:4-6*

*In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. 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.*

