

After the multitudes had left, Jesus gives the disciples more teaching about the kingdom of heaven. He then returns to His home town of Nazareth and teaches in the local synagogues. However, the people of Nazareth could not believe that a man that grew up among them could live up to the reputation they had heard about Jesus so they did not believe in Him.

Verses 31-43: Jesus gives two parables which explain how that the kingdom of heaven will grow to permeate the whole world and that people from all over the world will have a part in it. Matthew then explains that Jesus did not teach publicly without using a parable in fulfillment of Psalm 78:2. Once Jesus finished teaching and dismissed the multitudes for the day, the disciples then asked Jesus to explain the parable of the tares in the field that He gave earlier in vs. 24-30. He explains that in the world there will be genuine believers as well as those who only look like genuine believers (planted by the devil) but that God will not separate them until judgment day at the end of the world. At that time the non-genuine believers will be cast into hell while the genuine believers will enjoy the benefits of the kingdom.

⁴⁴ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Jesus continues to teach about the kingdom of heaven, next using two parables with identical meanings. In the first, Jesus describes a “treasure” that a man has found in a field and the man considers it so valuable that he is willing to give everything that he has in order to possess it. The picture is that entrance into the kingdom of heaven is something that is hidden from the majority of the world but is valuable enough to forsake everything a person has in order to possess it. The idea is not that you can buy salvation but that it is worth far more than any amount of money or wealth a person could possess. **Matt. 16:26** “*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*” Jesus wants us to see that the kingdom is not something for casual believers but requires a total commitment from those who would enter into it.

⁴⁵ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: ⁴⁶ Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

This second parable has the identical meaning to the first. In this one, a merchant is willing to give all that he has to own the extremely valuable pearl that he has found. As in the first parable, the idea is that entrance into the kingdom is worth far more than all material possessions a person could ever possess. Those who would enter the kingdom must prioritize it above everything else. Again, the point is not that we can buy or earn salvation but that citizens of the kingdom will value it above all else.

⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: ⁴⁸ Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. ⁴⁹ So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

This parable pictures Christ’s return at the end of the tribulation when He will judge who will be allowed to enter His earthly kingdom (Matt. 25:31-46). Like casting a net into the sea to gather fish, at this judgment all humanity on earth at that time will gathered together to stand before Him. The angels, who will assist in this judgment, will separate the wicked from the just like the fishermen do in the parable. The wicked will be cast into hell and the remainder of humanity will enter into the kingdom.

⁵¹ Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

We don’t know if the twelve disciples did actually understand or if they just thought that they did. Since Jesus did not challenge them on this then it’s likely that He was satisfied with their level of understanding. Judas Iscariot was among the twelve at that time and it was likely that he had only a superficial understanding at best (**1 Cor. 2:14** “*But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*”).

⁵² Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things new and old*.

“Then said he unto them, Therefore” – What Jesus says next is to be seen in the context of the disciples understanding the descriptions of the kingdom that Jesus has just spoken.

“every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven” – Jesus is not speaking of the scribes that have been critical and even antagonistic toward Him, but these are scribes who have studied the scriptures and have understood and believed the truths of the kingdom of heaven. These scribes could be anyone who has studied scripture and accepted Jesus for Who He is but it appears that the disciples in particular are the intent of Jesus’ point.

“is like unto a man *that is* an householder [*head of a house*]” – Jesus compares these believing scribes to a man who is the head of a house, responsible for the well-being of his family and anyone else under his roof.

“which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things new and old*” – The householder will bring “out of his treasure” (the things he has accumulated over the years) things as needed for his family’s use. Among those things will be old things as well as new things. Jesus seems to be saying that such a scribe will not set aside the truths gleaned from the old covenant just because the new covenant has come. Instead, he will use the older truths that still apply as well as the newer ones to spread the gospel of the kingdom. Since the disciples stated that they understood the things of the kingdom, they are to teach others the truths they’ve learned, both new and old.

⁵³ And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. ⁵⁴ And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

“And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence” – Once Jesus had finished teaching the disciples He leaves the area where He had been teaching the multitudes by the Sea of Galilee.

“And when he was come into his own country” – “His own country” refers to the place where He grew up: Nazareth. We know this because in Luke’s account Jesus comes to Nazareth (Luke 4:16) and a few verses later refers to the area of Nazareth as “thy [*referring to Himself*] country” (Luke 4:23) and “his own country” (Luke 4:24). Commentators believe this may be the occasion when He read a Messianic passage from Isaiah in the synagogue at Nazareth and declared that He was its fulfillment (Luke 4:16-30).

“he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished” – He apparently was not acting like the man that they remembered growing up among them. They had only perceived Jesus growing up as an ordinary and perhaps not too impressive man but now He had come back to town with great spiritual wisdom and was performing miracles.

“and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works [*miraculous power*]?” - It may be that Jesus did not call attention to Himself as He grew up in Nazareth before He started His public ministry after John had baptized Him. Thus it came as a total surprise to these people who had seen Him grow up as an “ordinary” man to see the wisdom and miraculous power that He now possessed.

⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? ⁵⁶ And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

The people of Nazareth point out their familiarity with the humble origins of Jesus. Nazareth itself was a small and inconsequential town in the rough country of the region of Galilee, which is why Nathanael questioned whether the Messiah could actually come from there (**John 1:46** “*And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.*”). These people also considered that Jesus’ “father” was nothing special (they don’t even call him by name), being a humble carpenter. They also state that they knew Jesus’ mother, brothers and sisters and that they were still around living in town, further eliminating any mystique about Jesus. They again restate the question: Where did this man get all these things that He is teaching and doing? Perhaps they thought Jesus was “getting too big for his britches.”

⁵⁷ And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

“And they were offended [*skandalizo* (*skan-dal-id’-zo*)] in him” – The Greek word for “offended” is *skandalizo*, which is where we get our word “scandal.” It literally means “to stumble.” They stumbled in their ability to believe that He was their Messiah because they could not get past their familiarity with Him and His family. They could not believe that greatness could come from such a humble family in Nazareth.

“But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house” – This was apparently an old proverb commenting on human nature. We more easily respect and honor someone whose origins are unfamiliar to us than someone who we saw as an immature child or youth. We tend to be skeptical of their worth in light of their humble origins.

⁵⁸ And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.

The Greek word for “mighty works” is the same word used in v. 54 (*dunamis*) and refers to miracles. **Mark 6:5** says “*And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.*” God only responds to faith and sometimes we miss the potential of what He wants to do in our lives simply because of our unbelief. The problem is not that God becomes less powerful because of our unbelief but that God will not respond to and reward unbelief. The unbelief of the people of Nazareth prevented them from seeing the power of God working in their midst to the degree He wanted. A few individuals had enough faith to be healed but the majority did not believe in Jesus.