

Jesus' Hometown Rejection
Matthew 13:51—58

All the parables spoken by Jesus relate to the setting up of the Kingdom. This isn't just limited to the actual Kingdom but also to the process of setting it up. Therefore, the Tribulation is also a focus of the parables since it is necessary for the Tribulation to happen to prepare believers for the Millennial Kingdom. An illustration should help to clarify what I mean. If I were to ask you what Christmas is, you may answer it is a time of shopping and meal preparation and singing and worshipping. It's a time of reflecting on Christ's incarnation and a time when we think of other people. It's a time of making cookies and candy and decorating the house... and on it goes. Most of these activities are not done on Christmas but are done in preparation for Christmas. Christmas day is the climax of all the activity that preceded it. In the same way Christ was preparing the Disciples for the climax of the coming of the Kingdom. This included getting them and the Little Flock through the Tribulation and into the Kingdom.

As a side note, the apostle Paul never spoke in parables, although he would often use similes or metaphors to make his point. He compares us to a field, a building or a bride or speaks of sowing but he never tells stories that could not be deciphered by the masses of unbelievers.

The same things Jesus warns His Disciples about are issues the churches in Revelation will contend with. This seems like an obvious connection since Jesus was preparing the Disciples to go through the Tribulation while the churches of Revelation 2 and 3 are actually enduring the last part of the Tribulation. Just as Jesus taught them to watch for Satan working within their assemblies, we can see Ephesus learning to test for false apostles (Revelation 2:2), Smyrna coping with Jews who are in the synagogue of Satan (Revelation 2:9), Pergamos dealing with the doctrine of Balaam—a prophet who tried to destroy Israel for material gain (Revelation 2:14), Thyatira entertaining the spirit of Jezebel (an evil queen who firmly established idolatry in Israel) in their assembly (Revelation 2:20), Sardis who only had a few who were not defiled (Revelation 3:4—5), Philadelphia dealing with Jews who were not true Jews (Revelation 3:9; Romans 9:6) and Laodicea who was pulled away from God by the riches the world had to offer (Revelation 3:17—18). All these assemblies are going to be impacted by Satan just as Christ warned the Disciples it would happen. This is just one small indication that the churches listed in the first chapters of Revelation are Kingdom churches and not at all related to the Church, the Body of Christ.

New and old treasure (Verses 51, 52)

It seems a little odd that the Disciples said they understood all what Jesus was talking about when there are many other times that they seem to be clueless. However, I'm sure they had a much better understanding of these things than most churches of today.

The scribes were those who would copy the Law and Prophets and were also very knowledgeable of Scripture. The scribes who enter into the Kingdom were not just knowledgeable but also believers of the Gospel preached by Jesus, John and the Disciples. They knew the old teaching about the Kingdom from the prophets in the Old Testament and now they also have the new teaching by Christ. Both of the old and new teachings were a treasure that if accepted would lead to the Kingdom.

Jesus Rejected (verses 53—58) (Mark 6:1—5)

This event probably happened just before Christ sent out the Disciples (Mark 6; Matthew 10) but Matthew, under the direction of the Holy Spirit, uses this incident to punctuate Christ's parable about the sower and the seed. It is here, in His hometown of Nazareth, that His teaching was promptly rejected, showing the Disciples how they will often be rejected during the Tribulation. This rejection came even though the people were amazed of His great knowledge, His extraordinary wisdom and His mighty working of

miracles. They were unable to get beyond the fact that they knew Jesus as a boy growing up in His dad's carpentry shop. They knew Him as a human but missed His deity.

Jesus refused to do many signs and wonders in their midst for the same reason He began to teach using parables, their unbelief. They had already refused to accept the Gospel of the Kingdom and therefore Christ turned from them and concentrated on teaching believers what it will take for them to get through the Tribulation. Even Jesus was amazed that the people would reject all the signs and wonders performed by Him (Mark 6:6). There will be no excuse for them for as we saw earlier, Gentile cities would have repented if they had seen these same miracles.

There were, however, those who did believe what Christ taught and it was the signs He performed that proved to them that He was their Messiah. When Nicodemus came to Christ at night he acknowledged that Jesus must have come from God because of the signs that He gave them (John 3:1, 2; Also see John 2:23; 4:46—54; 6:14; 7:31; 10:24, 37—38). All these works of miracles performed by Jesus came from the Father and testified to Israel that Jesus came from the Father (John 5:36).

Jesus' miraculous powers

How was Jesus, the man, able to do the miracles that He did? How could he turn water into wine, walk on water, cast out demons, heal the sick and know what people's innermost thoughts were? If He truly were a man then He would not be able to do these things on His own. Most people believe that Jesus the man relied on His deity to do these things. The answer to this is contained in Scripture.

According to John 5:30 there is nothing that He did on His own but put Himself in complete subjection to the Father (see also John 6:38; 12:49; 14:31; Philippians 2:6—8). This indicates that everything he said and did was under the direction of the Father. I believe He received knowledge from both His study of Scripture and from special revelation from the Father.

His Scriptural knowledge is evident from a number of verses. John 5:39 makes it clear that He knew what Scripture said about Him. This is, perhaps, how He came to understand that He was sent from God and that He had a mission to accomplish. Luke 24:25—27 also shows His understanding of how prophecy all fits together and what His role will be in its fulfillment. Although He said this after His resurrection, these are the same things He was teaching them before His death. John 7:16 says His teaching (doctrine) is not His own but comes from the Father (much of it through Scripture)

There were also things He knew that were not contained in Scripture. He was able to tell the Samaritan woman at the well about her past even though He had never met her (John 4). He was also able to tell the Scribes what was in their hearts (Matthew 9:4) and tell some of the Disciples what would happen to them (John 6:70; 21:18—19). He also not only understood the old teachings of the Kingdom (from what He learned from the Old Testament) but also added new teachings (Matthew 13:52).

Not only did the Father give Jesus the words to speak but He also enabled Him to do the Miracles according to John 14:10. All the works Jesus did proved that He was sent from God (John 5:36). This was why Jesus answered the disciples of John with a day full of healing and casting out demons when they wanted confirmation that He was the Messiah (Luke 7:18—22).

There is an interesting passage in Isaiah that speaks of Jesus' (future) reliance on the Father.

Isaiah 50:4—9 ⁴ The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. ⁵ The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. ⁶ I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. ⁷ For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. ⁸ He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. ⁹ Behold, the Lord God will help me; who is he that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.

Christ met with the Father every morning in prayer and the Father helped Him every step along the way.

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