

Review: after covering an overview of Millennial and Rapture views, and a survey of the Kingdom, we turn to an overview of eschatological passages in the New Testament.

I. Matthew. (ca. A.D. 50)

- Presents Jesus as Messiah and King
- Written to present Christ to the Jews

We covered eschatological passages in Matthew 5-7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Last time, we began Chapter 13: "The Parables of the Kingdom"

J. Matthew 13.24-30; 36-43. Wheat and Tares — the Kingdom in this Age

1. The Sower is the Son of Man; the enemy is the devil.
2. The good seed are God's children; tares are the devil's children.
3. The harvest is the consummation of the age.
 - a. The good and the evil remain mingled together in this age.
 - b. The angels will gather all things that offend out of Christ's Kingdom at the consummation of this age. (40-41)
 - c. Then the righteous shine forth as the sun. (43)
4. Timing: at the Rapture, the saints are removed, the wicked remain; at the end of the tribulation, the wicked are removed, the tribulation saints remain. That makes this prophecy point to the end of the tribulation, at the second coming.

K. Matthew 13.31-32. The Mustard Seed.

1. This portrays the external growth of the Kingdom from an insignificant beginning to an imposing appearance.
2. Broadus holds that this is the complete meaning of the parable.
3. Scofield adds that this is an undesirable aspect of the Kingdom.
 - a. Mere bigness is usually the spiritual downfall of a church or group.
 - b. If the birds are the same dirty birds as those in the first parable, this has an evil connotation.

- c. This view would make the parable similar to the Wheat and Tares, indicating the presence of evil in the Kingdom.
4. Scofield errs in attempting to turn the parables into an allegory: the details are not the focus, the parable communicates a single point, the birds only show how mighty the tiny mustard seed became.
 - a. The kingdom grows in the world – there are other plants growing in the world as well.
 - b. The mustard seed’s remarkable growth, from a tiny seed to a plant 12-15 ft high in one season, is the point of the parable.
- L. Matthew 13.33-34. The Leaven.
1. This portrays the internal, hidden growth of the Kingdom.
 2. Broadus makes this the whole idea of the parable.
 3. Scofield adds that leaven is consistently a symbol of evil in Scripture,
 - a. To a Jew leaven would have a bad connotation.
 - b. This would make it mean that error influences the Kingdom.
 - c. Christ defined the teaching of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herod as leaven. (Mt 16.6-12; Mark 8.15; Luke 12.1)
 4. However, leaven doesn’t *always* have a negative connotation in Scripture — used in the feast of weeks (Pentecost), for example (Lev 23.17)
- M. Matthew 13.44. The Hidden Treasure.
1. The Kingdom of heaven is a hidden treasure.
 2. It is a treasure that may be found unexpectedly.
 - a. As Abraham did (Acts 7.2-3)
 - b. As Moses did (Ex 3.1-4)
 - c. As the disciples did (John 1.45)
 3. It affords great joy to the finder, but...
 4. It will cost him all that he has to acquire it.
 - a. It is free of charge (Isa 55.1-2; Rm 3.24)

b. But it costs everything (Luke 14.26-33)

5. Scofield claims that this is Christ finding Israel in the world.
(commenting on 13.44, p. 1017)

“Our Lord is the buyer at the awful cost of His blood (1 Pet. 1:18), and Israel, especially Ephraim (Jer. 31:5–12, 18–20), the lost tribes hidden in ‘the field,’ the world (v. 38), is the treasure (Ex. 19:5; Psa. 135:4).”¹

- a. But how could Christ be ignorant of anything that exists in the world?
- b. If God’s people are elect before the foundation of the world, how could Christ be said to accidentally find them? (Eph. 1.4. Rom.11.5)
- c. If a man does not find the Kingdom in this world, where else can he?

“Some interpreters believe the person who hid and then paid a great price for the treasure was Jesus, the price being His own life. This seems unlikely to me since in all these parables the focus seems to be on the disciples more than on Jesus. They should pay the price.”²

N. Matthew 13.45-46. The Pearl.

1. The Kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking pearls.
2. He finds one unique pearl of exceptional value.
3. He parts with everything to secure it.
 - a. One of the things stressed here is the cost of gaining the pearl.
 - b. The other is the value of the pearl — it is worth it!
4. Men who seek the Truth and find it are common.
 - a. The Ethiopian eunuch. (Acts 8.27)

¹ C. I. Scofield, ed., *The Scofield Reference Bible: The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1917), 1017.

² Tom Constable, *Tom Constable’s Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Mt 13.44.

b. Cornelius. (Acts 10.1-6)

5. Scofield makes this Christ finding the Church.

“The true Church, ‘one body’ formed by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 12:12, 13). As Israel is the hid treasure, so the Church is the pearl of great cost.”³

- a. But is Christ a merchant wandering through the world hunting for churches, until He finally finds one better than others?
- b. If the Church is elect and foreknown, why would Christ have to hunt for it? (1 Peter 1.2)
- c. The only other time Matthew uses the word *pearl* it does not refer to the Church, but to the Truth. (Matt 7.6)
- d. God does use the figure of making a purchase when urging the church of Laodicea to find salvation. (Rev. 3.18)

“As with the parables of mustard seed and leaven, Jesus is reaching out to every person in his audience. He calls the spiritual seeker as well as the apathetic atheist.”⁴

Note: one reason we focus on the ideas suggested by Scofield is that they are influential among dispensationalists. For example, without naming him, the *Bible Knowledge Commentary* takes Scofield’s view of the Hid Treasure and the Pearl. Interestingly, Tom Constable, likewise a product of Dallas Theological Seminary, takes a more natural language view and eschews this complicated symbolism.

Searching for complicated symbolism runs the risk of adopting an (arbitrary) allegorizing approach to interpretation.

³ Scofield, *Scofield Reference Bible*, 1017.

⁴ Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, The New American Commentary 22 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 224.

O. Matthew 13.47-50. The Drag Net.

1. The Kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet which gathers fish of every kind.
2. Good fish and bad fish mingle together in the net.
3. After the catch, workers make a separation between good & bad.
4. The parable carries this age all the way to the end of the Tribulation.
 - a. The angels remove the wicked from among the just.
 - b. This is the reverse of the Rapture (righteous removed from the wicked) and will happen at the end of the Tribulation Period — see the comments on the Wheat and Tares.

P. Matthew 13.51-52. The Householder.

1. In verse 51, Jesus asks the disciples if they understood. They answer, “Yes,” though one wonders how completely they understood at this point. The next parable follows on this declaration of understanding.
2. The scribe of the Kingdom has a treasure.
3. He takes useful things out of this treasure from time to time.
4. Part of the treasure is new and part is old.
5. The scribe of the Kingdom is a disciple, who uses the treasure of truth to teach others in the ways of the King and the Kingdom as they grow in their own understanding.

“He brings out new understanding concerning the kingdom that Jesus had taught him as well as old understanding about the kingdom that the Old Testament taught him. The new did not displace the old but supplemented it. Jesus was comparing His believing disciples to this believing scribe. They had just said they understood what Jesus had taught them (v. 51). Therefore they had a responsibility to teach others what they now understood.”⁵

⁵ Constable, *Expository Notes*, Mt 13.52.