

MATTHEW 13-14



Bible Study Booklet

Acts 10:38 ... God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs

Program

MATTHEW 13-14 Preaching/ BibSt / Kiama Anglican 2021

Week Ending	Study	MATTHEW	Title	Page
Sun 24 Jan	1	13: 1-9;18-23	Four Soils	
Sun 31 Jan				
Sun 7 Feb	2	13:10-17	Speaking in Parables	
Sun 14 Feb	3	13:24-30;36-43	Wheat and Weeds	
Sun 21 Feb	4	13:31-35	Seeds, Yeast and Stories	
Sun 28 Feb	5	13:44-46	Buried Treasure and Fine Pearls	
Sun 7 Mar	6	13:47-53	Fair and Foul Fish	
Sun 14 Mar	7	13:53-14:12	Honourless Prophets	
Sun 21 Mar	8	14:13-21	Fish and Bread for All	
Sun 28 Mar	9	14:22-36	Walking or Sinking?	
Fri 2 Apr		Good Friday		
Sun 4 Apr		Easter Day		

BOOKS

France, R.T. Matthew (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries) (IVP, Leicester, 1985). *One of the standards.*

Osborne, G. R. Matthew (Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010). *Somewhat technical but very helpful.*

Blomberg, C. Matthew (The New American Commentary) (Nashville, B&H Publishing, 1992) (*Semi-technical but very helpful insights.*)

Wilkins, Michael J. Matthew (NIV Application Commentary) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2004). *Excellent exposition and application sections.*

In addition this is a more technical commentary but regarded as the best:

Carson D.A. “Matthew” in Expositors Bible Commentary (Revised) (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2010)

And this tome (846 pages) on Parables:

Snodgrass, K. Stories With Intent: A Comprehensive Guide to the Parables of Jesus (Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2008)

***Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs* MATTHEW 13:1-14:36**

Introduction

In Matthew 13:52 in the midst of the passages we are studying this term we read - *He said to them, "Therefore, every teacher of the law (Scribe) who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."*

In his book on Matthew[#], Patrick Schreiner argues that the Scribe (teacher of the law), Matthew, as he writes his Gospel, is pointing people to the kingdom message of Jesus and showing his readers the new treasures of Jesus' life and teachings and their basis is the 'old' treasures of the Old Testament.

In this series of studies, we see Jesus as a teller of 'stories' and a doer of deeds.

The Parables prompt us to think carefully about what it means to enter and belong to the kingdom of heaven.

The Signs point us to the nature of the King in the kingdom.

As we study these nine sections of the scripture, I trust that you see the great treasure that Jesus brings with the good news he preaches and will continue to see Jesus more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more nearly*.

Greg Holmes,
January 2021

[#] Schreiner, P., *Matthew, Disciple and Scribe*. (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2019).

* From St Richard of Chichester (13thC) or 'Godspell' depending on your generation.

Some thoughts on **PARABLES**

“The word ‘parable’ is hard to pin down. We use it mostly for a story taken from this life that conveys spiritual truth, and it certainly is used in this way. But it may also denote a short, pithy saying...a wise saying. Not much, however, turns on our definition. It is more important to notice what Jesus said and what it means to us.”

Morris (PNTC)

Snodgrass (whose book on parables is entitled “Stories with Intent”) Says that Jesus’ parables have these qualities:

- They are first of all brief, even terse.
- They are marked by simplicity and symmetry.
- They focus mostly on humans. Their main purpose is to goad people into response.
- They are fictional descriptions taken from everyday life but they do not necessarily portray everyday events.
- They are engaging. They were told to create interest and various schemes are used to draw hearers in and compel dealing with the issues at hand.
- They often contain elements of reversal.
- The crucial matter of parables is usually at the end.
- They are told into a context.
- They are theocentric.
- They frequently allude to Old Testament texts.
- They mostly appear in larger collections of parables.

“Matthew 21:45 makes it clear that the understanding of the parables is not so much cognitive as volitional.” Those outside the Kingdom understand the provocative claim of the parables very well but they are not prepared to accept it Jesus speaking in parables is not a riddle as such. What is perplexing is the behaviour that it calls forth - that man can see Salvation personified and never the less not come to conversion and belief. Again ‘Jesus deliberately concealed the word in parable lest men against their will be forced to acknowledge the Kingdom and yet he allowed them enough light to convict them and to convince them.’

Parables seek to goad people into the action the gospel deserves and the Kingdom demands. One of the main problems of Christian churches, of western Christianity in particular, is our stultifying passivity. The parables compel us, for Christ's sake, literally to do something. Parables do not seek the mild morality about which Kirkegaard lamented but radical cross bearing God imitating response worthy of the name, conversion.

Blomberg (TNAC)

And so we turn to Matthew 13 and 14.

“Matthew at this point relates seven parables, beginning with the parable of the sower, perhaps to show what a parable is. It is given importance by being followed by an explanation of Jesus' purpose in using parables and then an explanation of this parable. The other six are divided into two groups of three, separated by an explanation of the parable of the weeds. Each of the last six is introduced by “the kingdom of heaven is like...” (all seven are often called ‘parables of the kingdom’ but we should respect Matthew's usage; he does, however, speak of ‘the word of the kingdom’ in his explanation of the first, v. 19). Four of them are found in this Gospel only (the weeds, the pearl, the hidden treasure and the net). It is often said that Matthew has gathered these parables, though they were spoken originally at different times. This may be so, but verse 53 seems to mean that Jesus gave them as a coherent series.”

Morris (PNTC):

For this set of studies we are providing two possible approaches. There is the traditional one of 10(ish) questions and answers and also a variant of the so-called Swedish method. The first section asks you to talk about what jumps out at you from the passage, it might be the main point or it might be something that has impressed itself on you. The second section enables you to ask what questions the passage raises for you. What puzzles you? What words don't you understand? What phrases are difficult? Of course, you then need to seek answers either in the group or through other resources. The third section ask you to ponder what your response to this should be. This is the application of the passage for you. What are you going to DO in response to God's Word? The final section suggests you should seek things to pray about from the passage.

It is of course possible to blend both using the material in the 'traditional' set up to assist with the Swedish method. It is, of course, up to you or to your group.

Study 1: Matthew 13: 1-9;18-23

Four Soils

Before You Start

Note that this study focusses on the telling of the story in v1-9 and the explanation of the story in 18-23. The discussion in regard to Parables in general in v10-17 is the topic for the next study.

Why are we so captivated by 'stories' and storytelling?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 13: 1-9;18-23

The Text

1. What is the setting (v1-2)?
2. Briefly retell the story in 13:3-9. Try to imagine what you would think if you had never heard this story before?
3. From v18-23, what do each of the soils represent?
4. What 'hits' you about the interpretation?

Connections

1. Note 12:46-47. What does this context contribute to what follows?
2. What does v9 tell us about the parable?
3. In v18-23 notice the shift from 'it' in v3-8 to more personal terms. What does this tell you about Jesus' interpretation of the story?
4. Of the four soil types, who is 'saved' and who is not?
5. I believe that as much as anything this is a 'parable about parables'. Discuss.

Impact

1. What does this parable tell us about ourselves as 'consumers' of God's word and then as 'communicators' of God's word?
2. What soil are you right now?

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 1

Matthew 13: 1-9;18-23

Some Thoughts

Four Soils

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 2: Matthew 13:10-17

Speaking in Parables

In the chapter this passage occurs between the telling of the “Four Soils” and its explanation. Having looked at the parable we now turn to Jesus’ explanation of parables.

Before You Start

What do you think a parable is?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 13:10-17

The Text

1. What is the context of this explanation?
What is implied by the disciples’ question?
2. Who is Jesus speaking to in these verses?
3. What does Jesus say the parables do?
4. What are v16-17 saying?

Connections

1. What is meant by ‘the secrets of the kingdom of heaven’?
2. Read Isaiah 6:1-13. How does Isaiah’s encounter with God inform this discussion?
3. Are parables told to make things easy to understand?
4. Why is this discussion here in the middle of the parable of the soils?

Impact

1. How do these verses inform our own communication of the gospel and the reactions we are likely to get to that?
2. How do you become ‘blessed’ as in v16?

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 2

Matthew 13:10-17

Some Thoughts

Speaking in Parables

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 3: Matthew 13:24-30;36-43

Wheat and Weeds

Again, here, we look at the parable and its interpretation together and at the intervening material separately.

Before You Start

- How do you feel about weeds in your garden?
- What should be done about them?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 13:24-30;36-43

The Text

1. How does Jesus introduce this parable?
2. What is sown and what problem arises?
3. What solution is proposed by the servants and by the owner?
Which is taken up?
4. In general (in v36-43) to what time does Jesus say this parable applies?
(Note Matthew 16:27; 25:31)

Connections

1. What do you understand by the 'kingdom of heaven'?
2. Who is the landowner? Who is the enemy?
3. From v37-39 what does each element of the parable represent?
4. In the application of the parable, what happens to the 'weeds' and the 'wheat'?

Impact

1. In 21st Century Kiama what should the 'wheat' be doing about the 'weeds'?
2. Discuss what v43 means to you personally?

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 3

Matthew 13:24-30;36-43

Some Thoughts

Wheat and Weeds

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 4: Matthew 13:31-35

Seeds, Yeast, and Stories

Before You Start

In what area of our world do you see great growth from small beginnings?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 13:31-35

The Text

1. In v31 and 32 what is the kingdom of heaven likened to?
What is the result?
2. In v33 what is the kingdom of heaven likened to?
What is the result?
3. Who is speaking in v34-35 What is the point being made?
(Note again 13:10-17).

Connections

1. What is the point of the two parables? Is it the same?
2. Do you know of other uses of 'yeast' in the Bible?
Does it always have the same positive image?
3. Verse 33 could read "hid in three measures of flour" (ESV).
How might this relate to v34-35.
4. Note Psalm 78:1-8 (in its context (the entire Psalm has 72 verses). What is this saying about who Jesus is?

Impact

1. What do the two parables of growth say to us about our effort in evangelism?
2. Christ's "*truths, like parables, take time and effort to unlock. There are hidden realities that can only be known by serious Bible study and absolute commitment to Christ.*" (Osborne (ZECNT)) Discuss

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 4

Matthew 13:31-35

Seeds, Yeast, and Stories.

Some Thoughts

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 5: Matthew 13:44-46

Buried Treasure and Fine Pearls

Before You Start

What, in terms of material things, is your greatest personal desire?

If it was placed within your reach what would you be prepared to do to acquire it?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 13:44-46

The Text

1. What did the man discover in the field?
2. What did he do about it?
3. What did the merchant find?
4. What did he do about it?

Connections

1. What are these two parables saying about the 'kingdom of heaven'?
2. Is there any difference in the message?
3. Do these parables, in their detail, raise any moral problems for you? Is that a problem?

What value does the Kingdom of Heaven have?

Impact

1. Back to the introductory question: Belonging to the Kingdom of Heaven is of greater worth and lasts much longer than treasure or pearls. It is placed within your reach. What are you prepared to do to acquire it?
2. You know about the treasure and how to obtain it! What have you done about this?

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 5

Matthew 13:44-46

Some Thoughts

Buried Treasure and Fine Pearls

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 6: Matthew 13:47-53

Fair and Foul Fish

Before You Start

What separates 'the sheep from the goats'
(Matthew 25:31-46)?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 13:47-53

The Text

1. What is the story here?
2. What happens to the fish?
3. What is Jesus' interpretation?
4. What are verses 51 and 52 saying?

Connections

1. Which other parable parallels this one?
What is the same and what is different.
2. What warning is v50 giving?
3. Verses 52 and 53 finish off this parable section. What aspects of Jesus' ministry (and Matthew's recording of it) are our attention drawn to?
4. What treasures have you found in the parables and teaching of chapter 13?

Impact

1. What does the parable of the 'net' encourage us to do?
2. Do you see Jesus' teaching and his life example as great treasure?

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 6

Matthew 13:47-53

Some Thoughts

Fair and Foul Fish

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 7: Matthew 13:53-14:12

Honourless Prophets

Before You Start

Australians, it seems, love to put down 'tall poppies'. Discuss this.

Listen Carefully to Matthew 13:53-14:12

The Text

1. What is 13:35 saying? What function does it perform?
2. Describe the reactions of the people of Nazareth to Jesus' teaching?
3. What is Herod the tetrarch's reaction to Jesus teaching?
What does he do about it?
4. What had happened to John the Baptist?

Connections

1. Read Luke 4:16-30 which gives a fuller account of the events in 13:54-58.
What provokes the reaction in this account?
2. How do the reactions of the people of Nazareth and Herod (and his court) illustrate the point of the parables in chapter 13?
3. What is (are) Herod's problem(s)?
4. Note the end of 14:12 and the beginning of v13. Why the connection between the two events?

Impact

1. How should we react to Jesus?
2. Part of the people of Nazareth's problem was, it would seem, that 'familiarity breeds contempt'. Most of us are very familiar with the stories of Jesus. What can we do not to fall into the same trap as those in Nazareth?!

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 7

Matthew 13:53-14:12

Some Thoughts

Honourless Prophets

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 8: Matthew 14:13-21

Fish and Bread for All

Before You Start

What do you expect Jesus to do for you?

Listen Carefully to Matthew 14:13-21

The Text

1. From v13 what was Jesus' intention? How did it work out?
2. What did Jesus do for the crowds?
What problem presents itself at the end of the day?
3. Who did Jesus direct to do something about it? What was their response?
4. What was Jesus' response to the problem? With what result?

Connections

1. Why do you think Jesus seeks some private time (note also v23)?
2. Note 2 Kings 4:42-44. How does this connect to Jesus' miracle here?
3. What other occasions of God feeding his people do you know of?
4. Note the parallel accounts: Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-13.
What extra information do they bring?

Impact

1. On what basis do the crowd get fed?
Is the parable of the soils at work here?
2. In what ways are you fed by Jesus?

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 8

Matthew 14:13-21

Some Thoughts

Fish and Bread for All

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?



Study 9: Matthew 14:22-36

Walking or Sinking?

Before You Start

When we use the phrase 'walking on water' what do we mean? Can anyone actually walk on water? Discuss

Listen Carefully to Matthew 14:22-36

The Text

1. From v22-23 what did Jesus 'make' the disciples do? What did Jesus do? What happened to the disciples and Jesus during the night?
2. What happened shortly before dawn (v25)? What was the disciples' first reaction?
3. What was Jesus' reply?
4. Recount Peter's adventure and its outcome.

Connections

1. Why does Jesus send the disciples away?
2. What does the way Jesus comes to the disciples say about who he is? (Note Ps 46:5; Isa 17:13–14; Job 9:8; Ps 77:19; Isa 43:16.)
3. What is wrong with Peter's faith?
4. In our studies of Matthew 13 and 14, what have you learned about the King in the Kingdom of Heaven?

Impact

1. It is a trite question, but to whom should we look in the storms of life?
2. What do we learn from Peter here?

Intentional Stories and Revelatory Signs 9

Matthew 14:22-36

Some Thoughts

Walking or Sinking?

What shines from the Passage?



What questions does the passage raise?



What personal response can you see?



What are you prompted to pray about?

