

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 20 – January 20th – Matthew 13:24-46

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Matthew

- Hagner, Donald A *Word Biblical Commentary Vols.33a & 33b: Matthew 1-13 & Matthew 14-28*, Word Books, Dallas, 1993 & 1995
- Morris, Leon *The Gospel According to Matthew*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992

Verses 24-30

The parable of the weeds among the wheat needs to be understood in both literary and historical context. In literary context, verses 31-35, the parables of the seed growing by itself and of the yeast, is inserted between the parable of the weeds and wheat (vv 24-30) and its interpretation (vv. 36-43). The intervening parables contribute to an understanding of the parable of the weeds and wheat.

On the historical context Hagner comments, "This parable addresses a major concern of the whole discourse, namely, the delay of judgment – clearly one of the most innovative and difficult aspects of Jesus' doctrine of the kingdom. The immediate, natural reaction of the people to Jesus' proclamation of the presence of the kingdom was to wonder about the continuing presence of evil in the world, as manifested particularly in Roman rule over the people of God. The era of salvation was more or less equated with national-political deliverance. The remaining parables in the discourse deal with one aspect or another of the paradoxical nature of the presently dawning kingdom of God."

When Jesus spoke of the kingdom being 'like this' it was against the background of the Jews' expectation that the Romans to be uprooted from the promised land and the inheritance returned to Israel's children. Jesus tells a story which challenges their expectations and assumptions: the weeds are not so easily distinguished from the wheat. Who then are the children of the kingdom and who are the weeds? The day will declare it, and there may be some surprises in store. In the meantime, be assured that the kingdom is being established and nothing can stop it.

Verse 24

Ἄλλην παραβολὴν παρέθηκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων· Ὁμοιώθη ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπου σπειραντι καλὸν σπέρμα ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ αὐτοῦ.

ἄλλος, η, ο another, other

παρέθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

παρατιθημι place before, put before

ὁμοιωθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ὁμοιω

make like; pass resemble, be like

καλος, η, ον see v.8

σπέρμα, τος η seed

ἀγρος, ου η field, farm

Verse 25

ἐν δὲ τῷ καθεύδειν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἦλθεν αὐτοῦ ὁ ἐχθρὸς καὶ ἐπέσπειρεν ζιζάνια ἀνα μέσον τοῦ σίτου καὶ ἀπῆλθεν.

καθευδω sleep, be dead

"Good easy men, they cannot believe that anyone would do harm to their master's field; besides, watching and driving away trespassers is unpleasant work. 'Heresy hunting' is the nickname for watchfulness." Spurgeon.

ἐχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated

ἐπισπείρω sow in addition, oversow

ζιζάνιον, ου η weed (resembling wheat)

Usually understood as dandelion, a troublesome weed that resembles wheat.

μεσος, η, ον middle; ἀνα μεσον among

σιτος, ου η grain, wheat

Verse 26

ὅτε δὲ ἐβλάστησεν ὁ χόρτος καὶ καρπὸν ἐποίησεν, τότε ἐφάνη καὶ τὰ ζιζάνια.

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ἐβλάστησεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s

βλαστᾶω and βλαστᾶω sprout

χορτος, ου η grass, vegetation, shoot

καρπος, ου η fruit, grain, harvest

τοτε then, at that time

ἐφάνη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s φαίνω

shine; midd. and pass. appear, be seen, be revealed

Verse 27

προσελθόντες δὲ οἱ δοῦλοι τοῦ οἰκοδεσπότου εἶπον αὐτῷ· Κύριε, οὐχὶ καλὸν σπέρμα ἔσπειρας ἐν τῷ σῷ ἀγρῷ; πόθεν οὖν ἔχει ζιζάνια;

προσερχομαι come or go to, approach

δουλος, ου η slave, servant

οικοδεσποτης, ου m householder,
landowner, master
εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω
οὐχι (emphatic form of οὐ) not, no; used in
questions expecting an affirmative answer.
σος, ση, σον possessive adj. your, yours
ἀγρος, ου m see v.24
ποθεν interrog adv. from where, how

Verse 28

ὁ δὲ ἔφη αὐτοῖς· Ἐχθρὸς ἄνθρωπος τοῦτο
ἐποίησεν. οἱ δὲ ἴδοῦλοι αὐτῷ λέγουσιν· Θέλεις
οὖν ἀπελθόντες συλλέξωμεν αὐτά;

ἔφη Verb, imperf act ind, 3s φημι say
θέλω wish, will
ἀπελθόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
ἀπερχομαι
συλλέξωμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl συλλεγω
gather

Verse 29

ὁ δὲ φησιν· Οὐ, μήποτε συλλέγοντες τὰ
ζιζάνια ἐκριζώσητε ἅμα αὐτοῖς τὸν σῖτον·

φησιν Verb, pres indic, 3s φημι
μήποτε lest, otherwise
ἐκρίζω uproot
ἅμα at the same time, together
σιτος, ου m see v.25

"The problem lay not in the difficulty of distinguishing the two ... but rather in the fact that the weeds would be so closely intermingled with the wheat that some of the latter would inevitably be pulled up with the former and thus be destroyed. The roots of darnel are stronger and deeper than those of wheat, so that the removal of one would often result in the uprooting of the other." Hagner.

Verse 30

ἄφετε συναυξάνεσθαι ἀμφοτέρα μέχρι τοῦ
θερισμοῦ· καὶ ἐν καιρῷ τοῦ θερισμοῦ ἐρῶ τοῖς
θερισταῖς· Συλλέξατε πρῶτον τὰ ζιζάνια καὶ
δήσατε αὐτὰ εἰς δέσματα πρὸς τὸ κατακαῦσαι
αὐτά, τὸν δὲ σῖτον συναγάγετε εἰς τὴν
ἀποθήκην μου.

ἀφίημι allow, tolerate; leave
συναυξάνεσθαι Verb, pres pass dep infin
συναυξανομαι grow together
ἀμφοτεροι, αι, α both, all
θερισμος, ου m harvest, crop
καιρος, ου m time, appointed/proper time
ἐρῶ Verb, fut act indic, 1s λεγω
θεριστης, ου m reaper
συλλέξατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl
συλλεγω see v.28
πρωτον first, in the first place, first of all
δήσατε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl δεω
bind, tie

δεσμη, ης f bundle
κατακαῦσαι Verb, aor act infin κατακαιω
burn, burn up
συναγάγετε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl
συναγω gather, gather together
ἀποθηκη, ης f barn, granary

Carson issues a warning against those who apply this parable to the mixed nature of the church saying that Matthew nowhere equates the kingdom with the church. "The parable does not address the church situation at all but explains how the kingdom can be present in the world while not yet wiping out all opposition. That must await until the harvest. The parable deals with eschatological expectation, not ecclesiological deterioration."

Verses 31-32

Cf. Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19.

Verse 31

Ἄλλην παραβολὴν παρέθηκεν αὐτοῖς λέγων·
Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν κόκκῳ
σινάπεως, ὃν λαβῶν ἄνθρωπος ἔσπειρεν ἐν τῷ
ἀγρῷ αὐτοῦ·

For opening phrase, see v.24

ὁμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as
κόκκος, ου m seed, grain
σιναπι, εως n mustard
λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω
σπειρω sow
ἀγρος, ου m field, farm, countryside

Verse 32

ὁ μικρότερον μὲν ἐστὶν πάντων τῶν
σπερμάτων, ὅταν δὲ αὐξηθῆ μείζον τῶν
λαχάνων ἐστὶν καὶ γίνεταί δένδρον, ὥστε
ἐλθεῖν τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ
κατασκηνοῦν ἐν τοῖς κλάδοις αὐτοῦ.

μικροτερος, α, ον smallest, least

The sense may be that it was the smallest of the seeds used by Palestinian farmers in that time.

"That mustard is *the smallest of seeds* does not mean that nowhere is there any smaller seed. It is a way of saying that among all the seeds mustard is a very small seed indeed." Morris.

σπερμα, τος n seed, offspring
ὅταν when, whenever, as often as
αὐξηθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3s αὐξανω
grow, increase, reach full growth
μειζων, ον greater, greatest
λαχανον, ου n garden plant, vegetable
δενδρον, ου n tree
ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἐλθεῖν Verb, aor act infin ἐρχομαι
πετεινον, ου n bird
κατασκηνοω nest, live, dwell

κλαδος, ου m branch

Cf. Dan 4:12,21; Ps 103:12 LXX (104:12 ET); Ezek 17:23.

"By means of the parable, Jesus teaches that God's kingdom may seem unimportant and insignificant, especially in Galilee of AD 28. But the gospel of the kingdom proclaimed by a carpenter-turned-preacher will have a tremendous impact on the world at large. Jesus' followers consisted of a few 'uneducated' fishermen who were told to make disciples of all nations. These followers set the world on fire with the message of salvation, which today is proclaimed in all the known languages of the world. The tiny seed sown in Galilee at the dawn of the new age of Christianity has become a tree which today provides shelter and rest for people everywhere. And yet the day is not spent...

The tree's branches must continue to grow and extend to those regions that still need the gospel so that multitudes may find refuge and rest. And when the gospel of God's kingdom has been preached to all the nations of the world, then the end will come (Matt 24:14) and the tree will be fully grown." Kistermaker.

Verse 33

Ἄλλην παραβολὴν ἐλάλησεν αὐτοῖς· Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ζύμη, ἣν λαβοῦσα γυνὴ ἐνέκρυσεν εἰς ἀλεύρου σάτα τρία ἕως οὗ ἐζυμώθη ὅλον.

Cf. Luke 13:20-21.

ζυμη, ης f yeast

Or more strictly, a piece of last week's dough. "Some exegetes hold that leaven must be taken as a symbol of evil on the grounds that this is the way it is understood in the Old Testament ... But this is not invariably the case, for leaven was sometimes specified for use in sacrificial offerings (Lev. 7:13; 23:17-18). That in some contexts it may be used as a symbol for evil forces does not mean that in others it cannot stand for what is good." Morris. The picture is used here simply of the spreading or 'infectious' quality of yeast.

λαβοῦσα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s λαμβανω
γυνη, αικος f woman, wife
ἐγκρυστω place or mix in
ἀλευρον, ου n wheat flour
σοτον, ου n saton (a dry measure of about 10 litres)

τρεις, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

οὔ adv where; ἕως οὗ until

ζυμω cause to rise

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

"In the parable of the yeast, Jesus makes known the extent and outward spread of the kingdom. In the parable of the yeast, Jesus focusses attention on the internal power of the kingdom which leaves nothing unaffected." Kistermaker.

Verse 34

Ταῦτα πάντα ἐλάλησεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐν παραβολαῖς τοῖς ὄχλοις, καὶ χωρὶς παραβολῆς οὐδὲν ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς·

Cf. Mark 4:33-34 also vv 3 and 13 above.

ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude

χωρις without, apart from

οὐδεις, οὐδεμια, οὐδεν no one, nothing;

οὐδεν not at all

Verse 35

ὅπως πληρωθῆ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος· Ἀνοίξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὸ στόμα μου, ἐρεῦξομαι κεκρυμμένα ἀπὸ καταβολῆς.

ὅπως (οἱ ὅπως ἄν) that, in order that
πληρωθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s πληρωω
fill, fulfill, accomplish

ῥηθὲν Verb, aor pass ptc, n nom/acc s λεγω

The quotation is from Psalm 78:2 (LXX 77:2), a psalm of Asaph.

Some MSS (κ* Θ f^{1,13}) insert Ἡσαίου.

Hagner comments, "This incorrect ascription would ordinarily be favoured as the more difficult reading, which others corrected by omitting it. But it is perhaps even more probable that the original text had no name and that Isaiah was inserted (a well known practice among scribes)."

ἀνοιγω open

στομα, τος n mouth

ἐρεῦξομαι Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 s

ἐρευγομαι declare, tell

κεκρυμμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc pl

κρυπω hide, conceal

καταβολη, ης f beginning, creation

On the inclusion/omission of κοσμου Hagner comments concerning the UBS text, "The shorter reading would ordinarily be favoured, with the word κοσμου having been added in imitation of this common phrase (cf. 25:34; κοσμου is found in eight of the remaining nine NT occurrences). But because of the impressive MS evidence in favour of the inclusion of κοσμου [κ*² C D L W Θ f^{1,3} lat sy^{p,h} co TR], the committee retains the word in brackets."

"Just as God's salvation was made clear in Asaph's interpretation of history, Matthew is saying, so is God's salvation brought out in the parables of Jesus." Morris.

"The final objective phrase *κεκρυμμένα ἀπὸ καταβολῆς* [κόσμου] ... can be coordinated easily with the belief of the evangelist and the early Church that the message and mission of Jesus were nothing other than the working out of God's plan of salvation from the beginning. The parables teach 'the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven' (v 11). That is, what Jesus' words were revealing was the design of God for the final and perfect redemption of his people (cf. 1 Cor 2:7; Col 1:26; Rom 9:23). The teaching of Jesus in parables is accordingly regarded by the evangelist as the fulfilment of OT prophecy and involves the revealing of the accomplishment of God's salvation in history in a way similar to, but more definitively than, what Ps 78:1-2 describes." Hagner.

Verse 36

Τότε ἀφείς τοὺς ὄχλους ἦλθεν εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν. καὶ προσῆλθον αὐτῷ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες· Διασάφησον ἡμῖν τὴν παραβολὴν τῶν ζιζανίων τοῦ ἀγροῦ.

τοτε then, at that time

ἀφείς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἀφημι
leave, forsake, let go

Cf. verse 1 where Jesus had gone out of the house.

προσῆλθον Verb, aor act indic, 1 s & 3 pl
προσερχομαι come or go to
μαθητης, ου m disciple, follower
διασαφῶ explain; tell

Found in the NT only here and in 18:31.

ζιζανιον, ου n see v.25

ἀγρος, ου m see v.31

This marks a turning point in the Gospel. Previous to this Jesus had largely been engaged in teaching the crowds. From this point, the focus is on instructing the disciples.

Verse 37

ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν· Ὁ σπείρων τὸ καλὸν σπέρμα ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου·

ἀποκριθεὶς Verb, aor pass dep ptc, m nom s
ἀποκρινομαι answer, reply

σπειρω see v.31

σπέρμα, τος n see v.24

Verse 38

ὁ δὲ ἀγρὸς ἐστὶν ὁ κόσμος· τὸ δὲ καλὸν σπέρμα, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ υἱοὶ τῆς βασιλείας· τὰ δὲ ζιζάνια εἰσιν οἱ υἱοὶ τοῦ πονηροῦ,

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

"It is interesting that *good seed* is not the words that tell of the kingdom, but *the sons of the kingdom*, the people who receive and respond to the word. They are characterized by their relationship to the kingdom; they belong to the kingdom. The weeds also belong – to the evil one! Jesus makes a sharp distinction: in the end people belong either to the kingdom or to Satan." Morris.

Verse 39

ὁ δὲ ἐχθρὸς ὁ σπείρας αὐτὰ ἐστὶν ὁ διάβολος· ὁ δὲ θερισμὸς συντέλεια αἰῶνός ἐστιν, οἱ δὲ θερισταὶ ἄγγελοι εἰσιν.

ἐχθρος, α, ον see v.25

σπείρας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s σπειρω

διαβολος, ου m the devil

"The devil is the sower of evil men. There were none such until he came into Paradise." Spurgeon.

θερισμος, ου m see v.30

συντελεια, ας f end, completion

αἰων, αἰωνος m age, world order

θεριστης, ου m see v.30

Morris comments on *angels* saying, "The construction here is a preceding anarthrous predicate that according to Colwell's rule will mean 'the angels' not 'angels' (JBL, LII [1933], pp 12-21). That is to say, it is 'the' angels as a definite group rather than beings who have the general quality of being angels."

Verse 40

ὡσπερ οὖν συλλέγεται τὰ ζιζάνια καὶ πυρὶ καίεται, οὕτως ἔσται ἐν τῇ συντελείᾳ τοῦ αἰῶνος·

ὡσπερ as, even as, just as

συλλεγω see v.28

πυρ, ος n fire

κατακαιω see v.30

οὕτως and οὕτω thus, in this way

ἔσται Verb, fut indic, 2 s εἶμι

Verse 41

ἀποστελεῖ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου τοὺς ἄγγέλους αὐτοῦ, καὶ συλλέξουσιν ἐκ τῆς βασιλείας αὐτοῦ πάντα τὰ σκάνδαλα καὶ τοὺς ποιοῦντας τὴν ἀνομίαν,

ἀποστελεῖ Verb, fut act indic, 3 s ἀποστελλω
send, send out

σκανδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/
offence

"The things that trap people and lead them into captivity to sin." Morris. Cf. 18:6-7.

ἀνομια, ας f wickedness, lawlessness, sin

Verse 42

καὶ βαλοῦσιν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν κάμινον τοῦ πυρός· ἐκεῖ ἔσται ὁ κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὁ βρυγμὸς τῶν ὀδόντων.

βαλοῦσιν Verb, fut act indic, 3 pl βαλλω
κάμινος, ου f furnace
ἐκεῖ there, in that place
κλαυθμὸς, ου m bitter crying, wailing
βρυγμὸς, ου m grinding, gnashing
ὀδους, ὀδοντος m tooth

Cf. v 50 also 8:12; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28. Lenski quotes Trench saying that whatever the precise meaning of the words, "this at all events is certain, that they point to some doom so intolerable that the Son of God came down from heaven and tasted all the bitterness of death that he might deliver us from ever knowing the secrets of anguish which, unless God be mocking men with empty threats, are shut up in these terrible words."

Verse 43

Τότε οἱ δίκαιοι ἐκλάμπουσιν ὡς ὁ ἥλιος ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς αὐτῶν. ὁ ἔχων ὅσα ἀκουέτω.

τοτε see v.36
δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just
ἐκλαμπω shine
ἥλιος, ου m the sun

"The righteous are those accepted as righteous on the last great day; the term points to their acceptability, not to their meritorious achievement. *Shine* represents a verb found here only in the New Testament; the comparison to the sun brings out the radiance of the life to which they have come (cf. Dan 12:3)." Morris. Hagner comments, "This language is almost exactly the same as that used in describing the transfiguration of Jesus in 17:2 and suggests the experiencing of the glory of God."

οὖς, ὠτος n ear, hearing

As in 11:15, many MSS add ἀκουειν after ὅσα.

Verse 44

Ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὐρὼν ἄνθρωπος ἐκρυψεν, καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ ὑπάγει καὶ πωλεῖ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον.

ὁμοιος, α, ον see v.31
θησαυρος, ου m treasure store, treasure box

Here denotes the treasure itself rather than the place where the treasure is stored.

κεκρυμμένῳ Verb, perf pass ptc, m & n dat s
κρυπτω hide, conceal

"This analogy ... suggests that something of tremendous worth can be present and yet not known to others who may have frequently traversed the same field. Similarly, the kingdom can be present and yet not perceived, because its present form does not overwhelm the world or overwhelm resistance to it. But the person who does discover the treasure goes with joy (ἀπο τῆς χαρᾶς; cf. v 20; elsewhere in Matthew, see 2:10; 28:8; cf. v 16) to sell everything in order to obtain that field and its hidden treasure." Hagner.

ἀγρος, ου m see v.31
χαρα, ας f joy, gladness
ὑπαγω go, go one's way, depart
πωλεω sell, barter

"The friends and acquaintances of the two men in the parables must have shaken their heads when they saw that everything the men owned was for sale." Kistemaker.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as, how much

ἀγοραζω buy, redeem

Morris includes a helpful outline of the legal situation regarding ownership of 'treasure' in NT times. However, the point of the story is not to be missed through preoccupation with the niceties of legal arrangements in those days.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that

Matthew Henry says that Christ is the true treasure of the Christian (cf. Col 2:3). The open field is the Gospel or the Scriptures in which this treasure is hid for any to find or to obtain. "Those who discern this treasure in the field and value it aright will never be easy until they have made it their own upon any terms." Spurgeon, in exhorting us to sell all for the treasure of Christ says, "so did Jesus himself, at the utmost cost, buy the world to gain his church, which was the treasure which he desired."

Verse 45

Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ ἐμπόρῳ ζητοῦντι καλοὺς μαργαρίτας·

Morris comments, "Whereas in the previous parable the man apparently stumbled across the treasure by accident when he had no such thing in mind, in this story the man knows quite well what he wants and is definitely on the lookout for the best in the way of pearls... Nevertheless there is still something unexpected in his discovery: 'This pearl he did not expect.' (Hamann)"

παλιν again, once more
 ἔμπορος, ου m merchant

Cf. Rev 18:11-12.

ζητεω seek, search for, look for
 καλος, η, ον good, fine, beautiful, precious
 μαργαριτης, ου m pearl

"All the children of men are busy, *seeking goodly pearls*: one would be rich, another honourable, another would be learned: but the most are imposed upon, and take up with counterfeits for pearls... The true Christian is a spiritual merchant that seeks and finds this pearl of great price: that does not take up with anything short of an interest in Christ."
 Matthew Henry.

Verse 46

εὐρών δε ἕνα πολύτιμον μαργαρίτην ἀπελθὼν
 πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν καὶ ἠγόρασεν
 αὐτόν.

εἷς, μια, ἐν γεν ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one
 πολυτιμος, ον of great value, very precious
 πέπρακεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s πιπρασκω
 sell

εἶχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s ἔχω
 ἀγοραζω see v.24

"Those who would have a saving interest in Christ must be willing to put up with all for him, leave all to follow him. Whatever stands in opposition to Christ, or in competition with him ... we must cheerfully quit it, though ever so dear to us." Matthew Henry
 "No cost is too great when it is a matter of gaining the kingdom." Morris.