

W373_The_Mystery_3.mp3

[00:00:01] The portion of scripture we read together is rather a long one. And I'm. Asking you to just. Read to the verse 39, but I must make the introduction first. This is a recording made in the chapel of the opened book. And it is number three of the series dealing with the word mystery. It is our custom at these meetings to read a portion of scripture together. And if you are listening, care to join us? Will you switch off for a moment or two while we read verses 1 to 39 of the Psalm 78? Psalm 78, verses 1 to 39. You will appreciate that. We have read this part of Psalm 78 because it is quoted in the gospel, according to Matthew, and gives us the word parable, which is going to be a part of our subject this evening. And you will see that, first of all, as the psalm opens, it speaks about the provision of the Lord. And then. Because they were not steadfast with God. The children of Israel are children of Ephraim. Being armed and carrying bows turned back in the day of battles they kept, not the covenant of God. I think those words give you the idea that the disaster that fell upon them was because of their disobedience. Well, that's very obvious. Well, now we come to the gospel, according to Matthew the 13th chapter, because we are considering in this series the various mysteries that occur in the Scriptures.

[00:01:51] The first one occurs in the Old Testament and gives us a sort of pattern. While we must not confuse one mystery with another, they all belong to one particular feature or have one feature in common. They seem to be God's master move to counteract some defection that has taken place. You see the purpose of God? Is for the period. Being sort of implemented by poor, frail men and women. And there's always a possibility that the agent is going to fail. Well, if God is going to depend upon people like you and me. There's always a possibility that the purpose of the ages will never be achieved. So we understand that like a a wise leader of an army, he doesn't reveal all his plans to the enemy. The only knows what's written in the book. He doesn't know what's in the heart of God. And we discover that there was an attack made early upon the children of Israel because they were the ones through whom blessing was coming to the Earth. And the great master spirit of the evil side reasoned as far as we can see. If I can only stop Israel, I'll stop God. Well, then, of course, you know, that wasn't quite logical because God revealed the moment Israel was set aside that he had a purpose planned before the foundation of the world. And that is the dispensation of the mystery. But we have the same thing happening.

[00:03:28] In the Book of Daniel. It's the first and only book in the Bible that has the word mystery, although there it is translated secret. And there we have Israel captive, a gentile made head, and the word mystery coming in. But when we come to the New Testament, we have Israel beginning to take their place. As a disobedient and unrepentant people. The word mystery coming in and foreshadowing the same thing that was going to happen in when the whole nation not needed the people in the land acting in the same way so that it acts 28. We have it all over again. Israel rejected temporarily and a mystery brought in that were not made known until the circumstances demanded it. Well, we should not be able to cover all that ground, of course, in one meeting, but we will give attention to Matthew 13 so that we may learn what lessons there may be for ourselves and get further sidelights upon the way in which the word mystery is employed in the New Testament. The 13th chapter necessarily arises out of the 12th and the 12th arises out of the inept. And so, of course, you go right back to the beginning. Oh, yes, it's a wise thing to have a wide context. And so the first verse, the first verse of the gospel, according to Matthew, is a part of the context. And there is the book of the generations of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

[00:05:06] He doesn't go back as far as Adam, not in Matthew, David and Abraham. It's still within the limits of the chosen people. And then there came after the birth of Christ, there came a forerunner, and he had one outstanding testimony. Repent. Not because the church was to be founded. Not because it was preaching the gospel of the grace of God. Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And he was followed by the Ministry of Christ himself, who took the very self-same words repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Now, we are told in the Scriptures that John did no miracle. But at the moment our Saviour commenced his ministry. The whole land from one end to the other was shaken by an outpouring of supernatural power. All manner of diseases were healed. And then the disciples gathered around our Savior. In a certain amount of disturbed wonder how is it that this kingdom isn't set up? And so he gave them what we call the Sermon on the Mount. Which has been, I think, very wrongly expressed as the quintessence of Christianity. But as far as we are concerned, the quintessence of Christianity is the sacrificial work of the Son of God. And there's not a single reference to that in the Sermon on the Mount then at all. Others have said the Sermon on the Mount are the laws of the coming kingdom.

[00:06:34] Will I say save me from that kingdom? Because in that kingdom you may be persecuted for righteousness sake? Well, that's the same as it is now. In that kingdom they're going to say, Make you go one mile. In you go, Twain. You see? No, it's not the laws of the coming kingdom. It's the thing that you will have to endure and put up with. While the rejected king is off his throne, it's still to do with the king and the kingdom. Nothing to do with the gospel. And it's preaching. And then you come to the 11th chapter of Matthew and he could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief. Although he had done so many mighty works, they repented not. There's the key word. And they repented. Not. Well, then the kingdom of heaven wouldn't be set up. Well, what's going to happen now? And so we find in the 12th chapter, our savior is rejected in his threefold offices. In the 12th chapter. He says a greater than the temple is here. That would be his priestly office. A greater than Jonah is here. That is prophetic Office of Greater than Solomon is here. That's his kingly office. And it starts he went out of the house. And sat by the seaside. Now this chapter divides into two parts. What he said outside the house and what he said inside the house.

[00:07:59] And you will notice that we are not orthodox with regard to the disposition of subject matter, because you can go to libraries and you can take more than one book off the shelves entitled The Seven Parables of Matthew 13. And I mention this in case you may think there's a slip. Right back in the early days. When I was sharing very, very humbly, but very gladly some of the work with Dr. Bullinger and the close of his work Witness. I spoke to him about the parables of Matthew 13. And he put it into his appendix, you know, at the end of the companion Bible. This was a liberating moment in my life. In earlier days, I had such a little knowledge of the Word of God that whatever anybody told me, I dragged in. But there came a moment when I began to suspect that I was being indoctrinated by a good many things that wouldn't stand the test. So after having got over a shock, I made a mental reservation that I wouldn't believe anything. Until I saw it myself in the book. And then I wrote on the top of a sheet of paper. The second parables of Matthew 13 and said, Here, wait a minute. Who told you there were seven? Oh, you say, I'm not going to start counting them. I said, Yes, I must. I'm talking to myself. Of course. No, I said, it works.

[00:09:27] There are eight of them. And I come in that spirit to you friends, even in a meeting like this. Don't interrupt me. Just sit and listen. But search and see if these things are so. And then you won't be walking about in second hand armor, but you'll be

able to stand if others fall. So will you. First of all, look at the disposition of subject matter. And the lettering on this is rather. Sign in. It's not so heavy. I hope you can read it about. I'll just go through it. First of all, we have the parable of the sower. Verses 1 to 9 and then. The statement Israel did not understand. That's why he spoke parables, because now he was speaking cryptically. Then we have in verses 24 onwards the parable of the tares and you will notice the expansion of that. There were good and bad. They were separated at the end of the age. There was a furnace of fire and there was wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then you get the parable of the mustard tree and the level head, and that is the end of the word that is spoken inside or outside. Well, now, will you come inside? There's a change outside. It ends in corruption, which will see in a moment 1 or 2 verses that prevent us from speaking about leavening people with a gospel. Unless we are speaking truth and our gospel isn't worth mentioning.

[00:11:01] Leaven is always a type of corruption and wickedness in its usage in the Bible. So the outside story told to the people outside is that it was going to end up with just being leavened. Shall we say. You could say in connection with that aspect, when the son of man cometh, shall he find faith in the earth? And the implied answer is no. Well, now we come inside and only the disciples hear this. He said to them, Look, I've ended up on a very evil note outside leaven hidden. But that's not the only thing that's hidden. God has a secret purpose, and I'm going to let you into it. There's a treasure hidden. A treasure hidden. And of course, in those days, treasures were hidden. I suppose you do know that the place where you do your financial transactions and get the money over the counter is called a bank. Well, that comes from the idea of people digging a hold in a bank and putting their valuables in it. And in the early days, that was the only bank they had. They put their treasure in the US. And it was hit and he goes away and purchases the whole field for the sake of the treasure in it. This is the light on the story. That's why he's gone. He's coming back again to that treasure is going to be restored. That kingdom is to be set up, but it's going to be his by virtue of redeeming love.

[00:12:30] And the absence is all a part of the story. But that's the inside message. And then he speaks about a pearl in contrast to the mustard tree may be difficult at first to establish the reason why they contrast. We'll see in a moment. And then we have the net that is cast into the sea. And now notice he gathers good and bad. They are separated at the end of the age. There should be a furnace of fire wailing and gnashing

of teeth. Identical language. What that says to you and me that that's in its proper place. Well, then it says that the disciples did understand. He put it to them. Do you understand? Oh, well, I'll tell you the last parable. And it says when that's all over when he had ended these parables. So the scribe who brings out of his treasure things new and old, is the eighth parable, which is nearly always omitted from the story. So that is the exhibition of the way in which this opening section is distributed for outside. Painting mainly in failure. For inside giving hope that it will one day be rectified. Well, now, in that case, let's look at each one in turn as far as our time will permit. But it'll have to be sketchy because of the amount of detail. He spent many things unto them in parables saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow.

[00:14:02] Well, instead of reading the parable right through which of it is. You. More or less have in your mind. Let's see the interpretation of it. Verse 18. Hear ye, therefore, the parable of the sower. When anyone here is the word of the kingdom. What word? The word of the kingdom. We're still on the kingdom. Not the gospel of the grace of God, not the word salvation, not the forgiveness of sins. It's not mentioned. It's the word of the kingdom. Behold thy king cometh. He was going to see to all the rest. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and understand it, it not. Then cometh the wicked one and catches away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which receives seed by the wayside. And our Saviour was speaking about that which they knew because in those days when our Saviour was on earth, the little villages in Palestine had common ground all around them. And once a year or once in three years they had an allotment made. And that is what the psalmist refers to in the psalm says Thou maintain this by lot. I have a goodly heritage. He's referring to the fact that they put their hand into a bag and picked out a lot. That is yours. Your name? Ben Ezra. Now this is your lot. And he picks out that bit and that's the wayside bit around there that you might be growing anything on.

[00:15:32] Then there's another bit of thorny ground, but there's another bit that's good ground. Well, he was telling them what they knew. Now picture. So he said. That's very much like the ones you hear the message I'm giving. But he that received the seed in stony places. The same is he which here is the word and along with joy receives it. What you say. That's good. Yes, but he said there is this about it. That he may receive it too rapidly to be healthy. Because that is what happens. Yet had he not root in himself but dearest for a while. But when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word,

our version says by and by he is offended. Well, that's old English. It's a tribute to our laziness that the word which meant immediately now means later on. So if you could get away with it, you say, Well, I'm going to do it by and by, but you have to say under your breath, modern version, not ancient version, is it? So immediately they're offended. I've got here the. The stony ground, just the different ones. John the Baptist. Preaching the kingdom was a wayside preacher. Very, very few adhered to John the Baptist. Only a few believed a John the Baptist lost his life. As a consequence of his John the Baptist. The second ministry was Christ of the 12th.

[00:17:19] And. The common people, we are told, heard him gladly. And when he rode into Jerusalem, they strewed the these the road with their garments and with palms and they said Hosanna. And then tribulation and persecution came upon them. And the same crowd in a few days changed the word Hosanna to crucify him. As soon as the sun was up because they had no depth of earth, they vanished. That was the second time. So even Christ knew what it was to spend his strength and ought. You remember how he looked up to the father? He said, even so, Father, for so it would seem good in thy sight. Well, that was followed by the thorny ground. Verse 22. He also that receives seed among the thorns. Is he that heareth the word and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and he become it unfruitful. Luke's record says he bringeth no fruit to perfection. Now, in the acts of the Apostles, there were thousands of the day of Pentecost and afterwards who believed and they had all things in common. And that meant to say that the cares and the problems about riches had been laid aside temporarily. Then you remember it crept in and Ananias and Sapphira were stricken with death because they lied to the Holy Ghost. And soon the element of disruption came in and it never reached perfection. Whenever we get to the last show in the last.

[00:18:57] So many have taken this as a text for preaching the gospel that they are not conscious, they contradict themselves because of their preaching truth. They would first of all say, Well, now I'd like you to know that the heart of man is desperately wicked. Who shall cure it? And then they say, when you receive the word in an honest and good heart, you'll be saved. Will you say, Tell me something else? You tell me. I'm so wicked in my heart that I'll never believe anything at all. And he do say if I'll only believe I'll be saved. Oh, no, this is nothing to do with what we call a gospel testimony. This is still the kingdom. Now, God says there's a day coming when I will show. I will sell. And when God sends, there will be no mistake that time, the time will be right. And so we have the

time or so in verse 23 and he that received seed into the good ground. Is he that heareth the word and understandeth it. Notice in both cases, understanding is so important. We're not saved by our knowledge, but I think it's utterly impossible to believe a thing you don't understand. If I could if I could read Chinese to you. And I might say, that's true, friends. But would you believe it to say, Well, I don't understand it, so don't discount understanding and let people say we mustn't be merely intellectual.

[00:20:25] You've got to believe with your heart and believe with your head. And they both have to march together and understanding. Is he a very stressed he that receiveth the seed in a good ground? Is he that heareth the word and understand it which also berries fruit and bringeth forth some and hundredfold some sixtyfold and some thirtyfold. Well, now, when we read the Prophet Jeremiah the 31st chapter, he says the day cometh, thus saith the Lord when I will sow the House of Israel and I will not merely give them my law on tables of stone, but I'll write them upon the fleshy tables of their heart. And when that takes place, all Israel shall be saved. The king will return. The kingdom is set up and the mystery of the Kingdom of Heaven will have passed and finished. But for the moment, this kingdom is in suspense. For the moment, this kingdom has been preached by by John the Baptist. It's been preached by the Savior. It's been preached by the apostles and it's been confirmed by the Cross of Christ. And it's not yet up yet. And the king, instead of being here, is there. And what's he doing? Two things. One, a blessed one on our account. He ever lives to make intercession for us. But the other is which we mustn't forget henceforth expecting to dispose be made his footstool when the kingdom of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

[00:21:50] And he shall reign forever. So the parable of the Sower doesn't lose anything by letting it speak for itself. If it takes away from you the parable of the sower, because you've always, when you've been asked to take a beating, didn't know what else to say. You said, Well, beloved friends, we'll have the parable of the sower. I don't know whether I've ever been in meetings that so many times. The visiting speakers, they either have the parable of the sower or we have the prodigal son. You see, Well, they're wonderful parts of scripture, but there are other parts as well. This belongs to this calling. Belongs to this people and has the emphasis. Kingdom truth is here being established. Well, now let's go on a little bit then, and see what we can learn about the others. The next parable is a parable of the tares. Oh, first of all, before we go to that, I must go back on the story and we'll look at verse 13. Therefore speak I to them in

parables because they seeing see not and hearing they hear not. Neither do they understand. For in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith by hearing you shall hear, and you will not understand. And seeing you shall see and shall not perceive. For this, people's heart is waxed gross and their ears are dull of hearing and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and should understand with their heart and should be converted, and I should heal them.

[00:23:26] Now that's quoted from Isaiah six. And the Apostle Paul quotes those identical words in Matthew in Acts 28. He quotes them to the Jew in Rome, not merely to the Jew in Palestine. Christ gave them the testimony in Palestine. Paul gave them the testimony in the capital city of the world. They both reacted in the same way. They didn't understand it and they didn't receive it. And he said, the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles and they will hear it. And he called that the dispensation of the mystery in Ephesians. This tweet follows the rejection of the people of Israel and the failure of the setting up of the kingdom, both in Matthew 13 and at the end of the Acts of the Apostles. Well, now we come to the one. The parable of the tares. And. Now let me find where we start for that little bit further down. Verse 24, another parable put forth unto them saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field. But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

[00:24:44] So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou so good. She did not yield. From whence hath it pairs? And I won't read any more because of our time. You know, he told them they couldn't gather it out because they'd be taking up the good with the bad. Let both grow together until the time of the harvest. And then the one will be gathered into a barn and the other would be gathered to burn. Now, it seems to me that this recognizes that a two seeds in view, because you see in the description, it doesn't say these seeds which are being sown are words, but they are people. So let's get the explanation. Verse 36, Jesus sent the multitude away and went into the house. It's inside the house. You get the explanation, Not outside. Inside the house. And his disciples came unto him saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. And by the way, tares mustn't be taken botanically. I suppose you know that tears are leguminous plants of the Pea family or like Laburnum with three leaves and a

pod with seeds in them. Well, if you couldn't distinguish that between wheat. Well, you want your eyes tested, don't you? But this was a common word for weeds when the authorized version was written. The actual word that is here is a bastard wheat.

[00:26:12] It looks very much like it until you get to the grinding of it and then you find it's poisonous. The farmer himself couldn't distinguish the one from the other while they're growing. Not till they're right out in their full ear. What a picture of the two seeds in the earth. Right back in Genesis three. The two seeds are mentioned by God. He stayed in the Garden of Eden to to Eve. He said, I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed. Seed of the serpent. Seed of the woman. Here we have the enemy putting his seed into the earth. He put his seed in the earth soon after that for Cain, we are told, is of that wicked one and slew his brother. I never comes in the line of the two seed cane. Never does. So now we've got an enemy at work. And he says who the enemy is. And will you notice the way in which the explanation runs in verse 38 onwards? Oh, verse 37. He saith unto them he that soweth a good seed is the son of man. And that's the way he goes all the way down. So what I'm trying to say is this. That's the meaning of word parable. In other words, para means alongside, don't you? And you know, parallel lines. Well, at least when I was at school, parallel lines never met. But now I think they do.

[00:27:34] But I can't get my mind around that. You see, parallel. Well, this is parable. And that word means to throw like a balloon or a ballot or a ball to cast two lines together. So, look, the sower is the son of man. The seed is whatever it is. See all the way down. That's a parable. So let's get the explanation and see that the field is the world. The good seed are the children of the kingdom. The good seed here is not the sowing of seed of speaking words. These are the two seeds being put in the earth growing together. But the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels. And then there comes the harvest. The judgment, the dividing of the tares from the wheat, the barn and the burning. Well, what about the mustard tree? That's an extraordinary parable, isn't it? A parable of a mustard tree. Verse 31. Another parable body forth unto them saying the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed. Which are made to consolidate his field. And in case you were not aware of it, which indeed is the least of all seeds. And now I remember the objection. Oh, Richard, that's not true. That's where the Bible slipped up a bit because although mustard is a small

seed, if you have them in your hand, just like cabbage or turnip or very much the same little black seeds, yet there are seeds very much smaller than that.

[00:29:16] I don't know whether you've ever said to a nursery and for six months or whatever it is, you get seeds of some particular part and when you get it, you get a packet about that size. You open it and inside a screw of tissue paper so small you go like that and you've blown the seeds to God. You've lost them all. There's plenty of seeds, small as a mustard. But the Lord didn't make any slip. The smallest of seeds that are sown in the land. That's what he said. So need a field. So it's still true that that's the emphasis and he uses the mustard seed elsewhere. If you have faith as like a grain of mustard seed, it's such a small thing, you see. We today in. Certain legal contracts. We don't speak about a mustard seed, but we speak about a peppercorn. The peppercorn rent. You know, the people next door in that public house pay us a peppercorn rent. Don't upset yourself, Spence. They pay us a shilling a year by law so that that piece of their brick wall can never be theirs. If we want to build a tower and a whatever it is up there, it's our right to do it. But they have to just do that to make it legal.

[00:30:28] So we never got to do it. But there it is. Peppercorn. It means something very small. When our God said to the people of Israel, he said, Look, don't think I chose you because you were greater in number than any people. He says you were the fewest in all number. Now the mustard seed is a herb and it may grow to a fair sized bush, but if the mustard seed becomes a tree with branches sufficient to hold a fowls of the air, it's become abnormal. That's what he was trying to show them. There came a time in Israel's history when they said. Let us make ourselves. Let us have a king that we might be like the nations and Nebuchadnezzar had a figure in front of his mind is written in the book of Daniel. Of a tree and the birds of the air lodged in its branches. This people betrayed the trust that God gave to them. They rejected their true king, and they had put over them another king, who was rather on the side of the evil one. Babylon instead of Jerusalem. These are the things that happen to the sowing of the kingdom and the kingdom seed and the kingdom people because they did not believe, because they were not obedient. And then we have the lemon. If you look at chapter 16 of this, Matthew, you will see our Lord's own comment, which is sufficient for us for the moment, I think.

[00:32:04] Verse four, Chapter 16. A wicked and adulterous generation Seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it. But the sign of the Prophet Jonah. And he left them and departed. And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. And they reasoned themselves saying among themselves, saying it's because we have taken no bread. Which when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, Oh ye of little faith. Why, reason ye among yourselves? Because ye have brought no bread. Do ye not yet understand? Neither Remember the five loaves and the 5000 And how many baskets you took up. Neither the seven loaves and the 4000. And how many baskets you took up. This is going over the ground a little bit like Psalm 78. You see there the forgetting. How is it that you do not understand that I speak not concerning bread, that you should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees? Then understood they how he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The doctrine is leaven. And here you get three measures of meal and a whole element. Whatever the three measures of the amount to.

[00:33:38] Whether their significance in three or not the whole of its length. If it comes to that. Idiot. As a finish outside. Dark picture. Indeed, isn't it? The whole event. And then they went inside the house. And he said. Will you come inside the house? I've got another light to shine on this story. There's also a treasure. Verse 44 again, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hid in a field the which when a man hath found, he hideth. You see? It's hidden. He finds it. He hides it back again in order that he may get legal possession of that piece of land. And said it all that he hath and by that field. Well, that's what our savior did. But if you leave this out and say to some poor soul who is seeking the way of salvation, you've got to sell all you have and buy the field in order to be saved. Well, if he knows the Bible, he said, well, I'll never be saved, as if I never as old as Methuselah. This is nothing to do with him. This is what our savior did. Again. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man seeking goodly pearls. Which when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Now, in what way does the Pearl in any measure fit into the story? In what way does it fit into the mustard tree? I can't see very much connection between a mustard tree and a pearl, can you? No.

[00:35:17] That's because you haven't got eyes to see or understanding to see. Look. It's like this. The mustard seed. You forget about the mustard and the seed and the tree and you say they just forgot their peculiar, wholly distinctive character and they lost. Now, the treasure hidden in the field is not described. It might be a lot of gold. Gold coins. But this is a very distinctive sort of treasure. This is the only jewel that I know of which is organic and living wax. The pearl has been produced by a certain amount of irritation. I'd hardly like to say suffering on the part of the Pearl oyster. But that's how it's formed. The oyster is blowing bubbles not because it's joyful, but because it's got an irritating piece of grit and round that forms the precious iridescent lines of the pearl. So now we have a treasure which is a little bit more than merely being chosen by God. But those who suffer for him if needs be. This is the pearl of great price in the sight of God. This is anticipating the overcomers who have a right into the heavenly Jerusalem. And when they go through the gates, do you know what the gates are made of? But I'm not going to tell you, you know, don't you? They're made of pearl.

[00:36:40] The only way of getting in is through the pearly gates. Well, you know, other people are going through the pearly gates were shot when they know that the pearl always means if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him. There's only overcomers going through there. And that's what we have in this passage. So now we come to the next. Again. The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea and gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore and sat down and gathered the good into vessels and the bad away. Now, that doesn't mean to say there are bad fish in the sea. I mean, there may be bad fish, but not in the sense we understand it. There are certain types of fish which Israel were told were unclean. And they would be the bad ones which they threw away. There were certain types of fish which Israel would eat and they were the good ones that they could keep. And when you speak about having a Dover sole, you remember you'll have a fish that Israel would eat because one of the stipulations is that it must have fins and it must thresh its way through the water. It mustn't just wobble about in the mud like all the flatfish do. The plates and the soles and all those which we reckon to be titbits because we are just gentiles.

[00:37:59] So this is not the good and the bad, but the clean and the unclean. This is bringing the Gentile in. As well as the right to the the people of Israel who belong rightly to it at the beginning. And then they are just divided up between the one on the other

and cast away. So shall it be. At the end of the world, the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just. And the words are repeated that we had about the tares. So we've got those two once again now, he said to the disciples, verse 51, Have you understood all these things? Now, it says in the earlier case that Israel did not understand, but they said, Yes, Lord. So here's the little remnant that did understand That's all. They were a remnant. Then said he unto them. Therefore, every scribe which is instructed into the kingdom of heaven, it's still the kingdom of heaven. Not a church and not the gospel of salvation that we know is like unto a man. That is a householder which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. And that's what we seek to do in this chapel, because if I'm not careful, our only theme in this chapel for morning, noon and night would be the epistle to the Ephesians, which would be very wrong and out of balance.

[00:39:22] So you remember we waded through Joshua and judges, and when this series of the Mystery and Heavenly places and the epistle to the Ephesians is over, we want to go back and get a bit more of the Old Testament so that out of the treasure we bring things new and old and get a balanced teaching. That is what our Lord commanded here. So there we've got this parable which is said to give us the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. Suppose we look back again now and look at verse 34 and 35. All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables and without a parable spake he not unto them. Why? That it might be fulfilled, which was spoken by the Prophet, saying I will open my mouth in parables. I would utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world. It wasn't made known in the Old Testament that Israel would utterly fail when the Messiah came. Because when you read the Old Testament prophets, there's not a distinction made between the first coming in humility to be born at Bethlehem and the Second Coming in Power and Glory to take the kingdom. The sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. Go for one next verse to the other. But you have to put him between a period of about 2000 years between the sufferings and the glory. So there's the element of secrecy about it and mystery.

[00:40:58] And the parable form was adopted that that mystery should be given to those who had ears to hear and those who had not the ears to hear that. Here's a little story that was told, and that's the end of it. And that's what sometimes all the scripture means. But it's a very awful thought to think that the way in which you react to the

Scripture is the way in which you're going to be judged. Do you remember as you reacted to the Word of God, so it will act to you? Believe the Word of God is like a sensitive plant that is conscious of the approach. And it can shut up its petals or open them for you to look at according to the way in which you address yourself to it. And these people chosen by God in Abraham, destined to be a kingdom of priests in the earth, acted like this, rejected their Messiah, and so doing rejected themselves. But isn't it good to know that in this awful conflict between right and wrong. Darkness and light. Good and evil. God himself has the last word to say. And he has this word mystery. He comes in here. There's a mystery in one Corinthians. There's a mystery of Israel's blindness. There's a mystery of God that is finished in the Book of Revelation. And all these are being used by him because of the failure and defection on of some part of the.

[00:42:26] Agents that are employed by him. And the question comes into our mind, well, why does he adopt that method? And the only answer that I can give is because he wants to have a moral world, not a mechanical one. Do you understand what I mean? Goddess produced a mechanical creation. There is a clock at work that's been going on as far as we can go back. For, say, 5000 years. And it's keeping good times still. The earth is going round the sun and the moon is going round the earth. Keeping absolute precision. But then you see, the trouble about it is the Earth doesn't know anything about it. Nobody has ever seen the other side of the moon. They've got a photograph of it. But the moon always turns its face to the earth when it goes round like that, never slips up or goes back. But you see, however marvelous that is. The room doesn't know it. The moon can never turn round to God and say, I don't think I'll twist like that. I'll have another way round. Never dream of it. The sun will rise and the sun will set. As long as God demands it without knowing it's doing it. But when God made a man, he put the word if into the world. When he said, Let there be light. There was no if about it. Light was. But when he put man on his head, he said, Now I've given you that God.

[00:44:05] If you take that tree, I will do something. God says I'm going to wait for you, Adam. That's when you're dealing with a moral creature. Well, now, if God can at length get the undivided heart's affection of a person who can turn round and say no, who ultimately says, Oh Lord, yes. That will be a kingdom worth setting up friends. And that will justify all the misery. Sometimes that has to be endured while that process is going on. That's only a very rough and ready way of solving a tremendous problem. But I

believe there's that point in it that at long last, God will not be all as He is in creation. He will be all in all, which he isn't. Now because of rebellion. Well, that's another attempt in the time we have to give the context of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. And I hope those of you who are listening will not turn to them and try to preach the gospel from them, for it's not there. Go to the parts of Scripture which give you the way of salvation without any peradventure and you'll discover that your hearers will find it meet their needs far more than telling them all about the parable of the Sower, which God never put into the book for that purpose. Now we have other features to deal with in future studies, but we'll have to leave those for when we meet together next time.