



BEIJING INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

INTRODUCTION

This study guide will be most helpful if you work through it slowly with an open Bible, looking up all the references. Grab some friends and do it together!



KINGDOM STORIES

PARABLES THAT
INFURIATE OR INSPIRE



Kingdom of Heaven

INTRO

ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν

Kingdom

GREEK *bä-sē-lā'-ä'*

Heaven

GREEK *ü-rä-no's*

Read the Following Verses:

Matthew 3:2

*“**Repent**, for the kingdom of heaven **is at hand**.”*

Matthew 5:20

*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, **you will never enter** the kingdom of heaven.*

Matthew 12:28

*“If it is by the power of the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God **has come upon you**.”*

How would you describe the Kingdom of Heaven? Do you think it is here now or something we will enter into in the future?

When the Messiah (and His Kingdom) comes what will happen?

EXPECTATIONS	REALITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible defeat of God’s enemies • Return His people to the Promised Land • Fulfill the promises of a Davidic throne and rule upon the earth in power and glory. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visible defeat, but not removal • Return His people to Himself • Return rule and power to His people.

Col. 2:14-15 2 Cor. 5:19 Matthew 18:18, 28:18-20

“Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?”

These parables in Matthew 13 are an explanation of how people in chapters 11-12 responded to Jesus. Read **Matthew 11:2-3** paying attention to John’s response to Jesus’ Kingdom. Why does John ask this question?

Christ’s Deeds	Bringing the Kingdom	
Matthew 11:13 <i>Heal Sick</i>	Matthew 9:2 <i>Forgive Sin</i>	Matthew 8:31-32 <i>Cast out Demons</i>
		Matthew 5:3 <i>Preach to the Poor</i>



What kind of Kingdom did Jesus bring to us? Do **we** have any wrong expectations of the present Kingdom?

The Already, Not Yet Kingdom

1

George Ladd: "fulfillment without consummation."
Many kingdom blessings can be experienced today;
many are reserved for the return of Jesus.



What do we experience now? What can we only experience when Jesus returns?

2

George Ladd: "The Kingdom is a rule, not a realm. The kingdom can be defined as the 'reign of God.'"



Is our ultimate goal a place to live forever (Heaven) or a person (Jesus) to worship forever? Is there a difference between these two ideas?

3

Sam Storms: "D-Day is past; V-Day is in the future."
The Kingdom has invaded earth. Complete victory is coming soon!



Today's parable teaches us that evil still exists in the world. But Jesus has already defeated evil. Why do you think he allows it to continue?

The Parable of the Weeds

What are the main pictures in this parable and what do they represent?

1. SOWER

See Matthew 13:37

2. Field

See Matthew 13:38

3. Good Seed

See Matthew 13:38

4. Bad Seed

See Matthew 13:38

5. Enemy

See Matthew 13:39

6. Harvest

See Matthew 13:39

7. Reapers

See Matthew 13:39



What parts of the parable did Jesus NOT explain?



Should we try to explain these parts of the parable?

What do you think is the MAIN idea of this parable?

Main Ideas

Parable of the Weeds



Evil

The Bible doesn't begin by explaining evil. It simply presents it as a present reality (Satan is just in the garden). In this parable the servants question **HOW** these weeds could exist if the Master sowed good seed. Interestingly enough Jesus doesn't explain v. 29. He expects us to trust Him and have faith that He is in control.



Have you ever questioned the goodness of God because of the existence of evil? What is a Biblical response to God's goodness and Evil's presence?

Let's look at how the seed of Satan (those who do evil) and the seed of God (those who suffer from evil) are portrayed in the Bible.

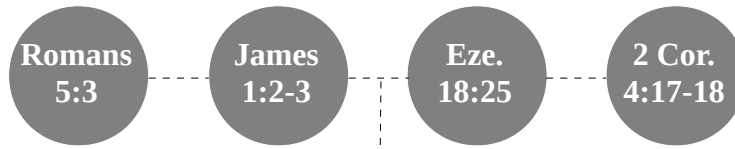
Children of Satan	Children of God
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cain – I John 3:12 • Ishmael – Romans 9:7-9 • Esau – Hebrews 12:15-17 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abel – Hebrews 11:4 • Isaac – Heb. 11:20 • Jacob – Romans 9:13
KILLED BY CAIN	See John 8:44
MOCKED BY ISHMAEL	THREATEN TO BE KILLED BY ESAU

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

GENESIS 3:15

Jesus is the true Son of God who suffers (as truly innocent) at the hands of the Evil One.
Remember that God has not allowed us to suffer something He Himself was not willing to suffer through.

Verses to consider when thinking about Evil:



God has a purpose for evil and suffering. Perhaps v. 43 helps to explain why the weeds are allowed to remain.



Can you think of an evil that God has used for good?



How did the early church respond to suffering? Is that different from how we respond to suffering today?



————— Judgement —————

To explain the **purpose** of Evil doesn't always bring us comfort. In this parable Jesus reminds us that there will come a day when evil is dealt with. When Jesus returns he comes to bring Justice.

*How does the parable describe the justice that Jesus will bring to the weeds?
How do you feel about this?*

**Let Justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.
Amos 5:24**

Jesus Brings	Justice
Luke 18:7	And will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them?
Revelation 6:10	“O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?”

Is it right to long for justice? If so, is there a wrong way to wait for justice?

*Justice doesn't just deal with punishment, but also with reward.
According to this parable, what reward will the sons of God receive? (See Matt. 13:30, 43)*

**SEE ALSO
REV. 21:1-4**

CS LEWIS

"They say of some temporal suffering, 'No future bliss can make up for it,' not knowing that Heaven, once attained, will work backwards and turn even that agony into a glory."

Offer a prayer in response to what the Lord taught you today.

The next two parables come between the Parable of the Weeds and its explanation. There are different opinions about what Jesus meant by these two parables. Here are a few ideas:

1

Leaven is almost always seen as negative, therefore these two (twin) parables must be about sin and evil being present among God's people. (Similar to the parable of the weeds)

2

The Birds represent the different people groups that are allowed to enter into the Kingdom. The leaven represents the change the Kingdom will bring on the (entire) world.

3

These two parables can be explained by v. 51-52 The Kingdom starts with the Old Testament truths and grows into the New Testament reality. Wise men do not disregard either.

4

These two parables reflect the reality that the Kingdom is "already, not yet." Like leaven and the seed it is present and growing every day. We must wait patiently until the Kingdom is fully established.

How do you interpret these two parables and why?

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**EXTRA
DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

1 Jesus spends a lot of time talking about hell. Many today don't like to focus on the punishment that awaits unbelievers. Why do you think this is?

2 When evil happens to us, what is the proper response? Is this our "default" response?

3 Try to connect this parable to last week's parable. Do you see a correlation between what this parable is teaching and a cause for one of the soils to not produce fruit?

4 Revelation 20:15 tells us the fate of the unrighteous and Revelation 22:5 tells us the fate of the righteous. How do these verses compare to this parable.

5 What in this parable do you not understand?

6 What damage do you see the weeds doing in the world today? How can the Kingdom overcome this evil?



INTRODUCTION

What dangers are out there that want to keep us from fully experiencing the Kingdom?

1 **There are weeds in the wheat. (People)**
What people in your life should you avoid?

2 **There are birds in the trees. (Demons)**
Have you ever experienced demonic activity? How should we fight against demons? Where does the Bible teach on this?

3 **There is bread filled with yeast. (Ideas)**
*What ideas does this generation hold that is dangerous?
What ideas might you hold that isn't Biblical?*

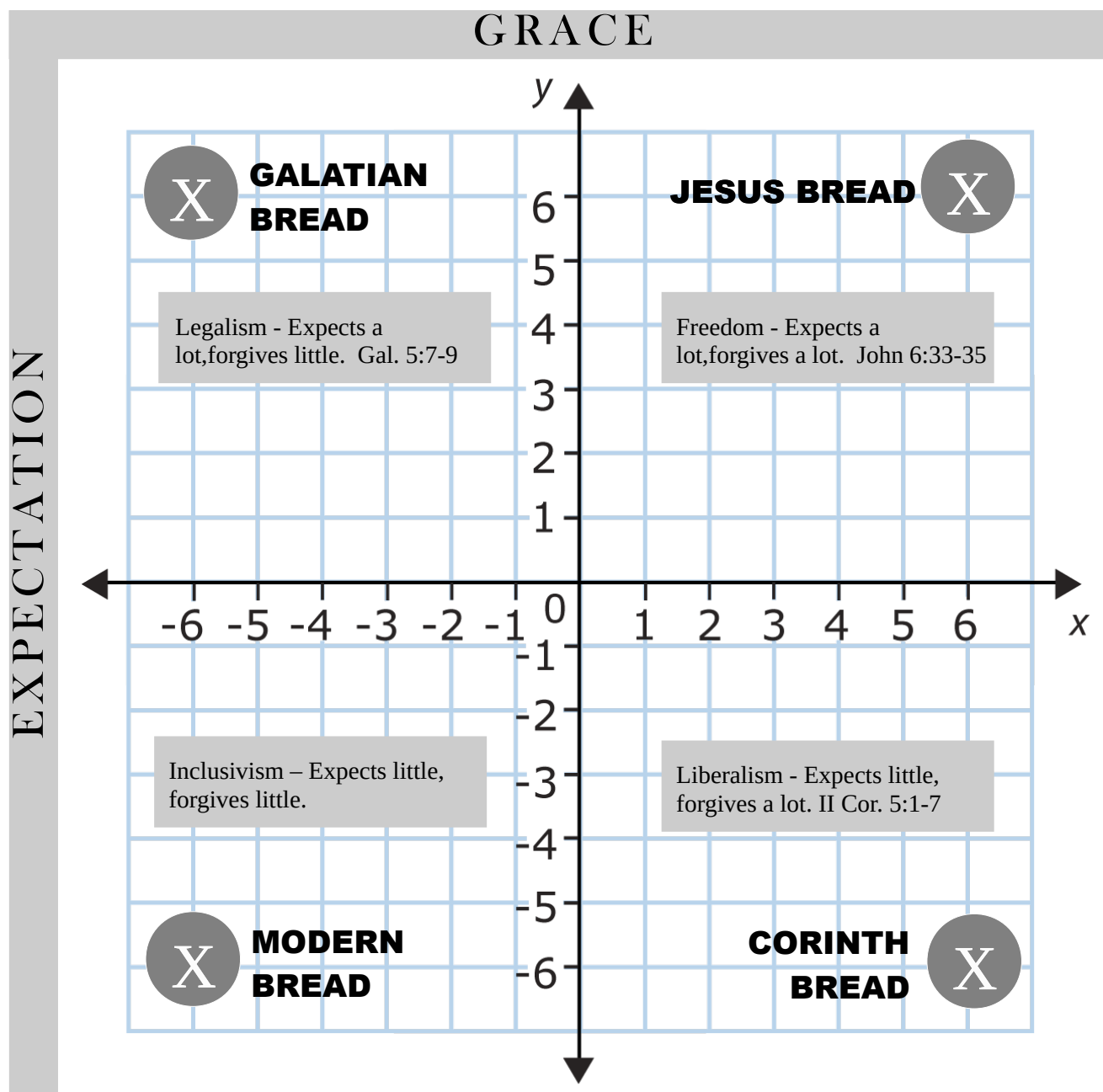
CHALLENGE

Live life this week intentionally aware that dangers are out there. Put on the full armor of God and do battle against the evil one.



Grace and Expectation

Grid



Where would you place yourself on this grid?



Where do you expect others to live?