

Triennial Torah Study – 4th Year 09/11/2013

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We continue this weekend with our regular Triennial Torah reading which can be found at https://sightedmoon.com/sightedmoon_2015/files/TriennialCycleBeginningAviv.pdf

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| Gen 9 | Josh 21-22 | Ps 19 | Mat 12:22 – 13:23 |
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The Noachian Covenant (Genesis 9)

When Noah and his family disembarked from the ark, releasing the animals, God evidently depacified the animals (as they had apparently been made docile by Him for their voyage on the ark). At this point He also delegated the administration of the death penalty to man. At the same time God permitted meat to be eaten (verse 3). Some seize on this as proof that men were supposed to be vegetarians before the Flood. However, Abel sacrificed an animal and, as Leviticus shows, parts of sacrifices were eaten. Moreover, the apostle Paul later explained that some animals—those the Bible designates as “clean” (see Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14) —were created to be eaten (1 Timothy 4:3-4). Indeed, we already saw the distinction drawn between clean and unclean—i.e., edible and inedible—animals before the Flood in Genesis 7. Why would there have been a distinction at that time if animals were not then eaten? Thus it appears that God was simply telling Noah and his family that it was okay to eat animals again —which likely means they had not been permitted to eat any of the animals on the ark. Perhaps that would have depleted some species before they had a chance to amply multiply after the Flood.

God also established a special covenant with man, promising never to send a universal deluge again. As a token (or sign) of the promise, God “set” the rainbow in the sky (verse 13). The Hebrew word translated “set” is *nathan*, meaning give. This has led some to suggest that the rainbow had never been seen before. If this suggestion is true, it would mean that God either modified the laws of physics governing optics, for a rainbow is just the product of the refraction of light through the medium of airborne water droplets, or that He altered the atmosphere of the earth, perhaps by removing some kind of upper vapor canopy that formerly altered the character of the light reaching the earth’s surface. Such a vapor canopy may help to explain the rain of 40 days and 40 nights when the “windows of heaven were opened” (7:11-12). And this may have constituted the “waters which were above the firmament” in Genesis 1:7.

A Curse on Canaan (Genesis 9)

Some decades after the Flood (time enough for Noah’s sons to father their own sons and for these grandchildren to grow up), Noah became a husbandman, growing grapes and making wine. Then, when he drank the wine, he became intoxicated and fell asleep in his tent, whereupon, the Bible records, his nakedness was uncovered. This expression is used throughout Leviticus 18 to denote sexual relations. When Noah’s son Ham discovered him, he

told his brothers, who then covered their father. When Noah awoke, he learned of what happened and called forth a curse upon Ham's youngest son, Canaan. Why? Why should Canaan be cursed?

Verse 24 states that Noah "knew what his younger son had done to him." This is often interpreted to mean that Noah "knew what his [Noah's] younger son [Ham] had done to him." Yet if Ham himself were guilty of whatever wrong had been committed, we might assume that Noah would have cursed him personally or, if his offspring were to be cursed, that it would apply to all his offspring or perhaps the eldest and his family rather than just Ham's youngest son Canaan and those who would spring from him. So the most likely scenario is that Canaan himself had committed the wrong—apparently some sexual sin against Noah while Noah was intoxicated—which Ham discovered. Thus verse 24 should probably be understood to read that Noah "knew what his [Ham's] younger son [Canaan] had done to him"—particularly if we consider verse 23 as parenthetical.

Joshua 21

In its note on the end of chapter 21, verses 43-45, The Nelson Study Bible states: "This glorious conclusion to these two chapters and to the entire section (chs. 13-21) celebrates the fact that all came to pass exactly as God promised. [That is, it should be clarified, while there was still more to come, all had so far gone exactly as God had said it would.] What has been visible all along is now said plainly—the God of Israel is a promise-keeping God, who gave Israel the land in accordance with the promises He had made with its ancestors, including Moses and the patriarchs. And in addition to giving them the land, He also granted them rest."

The Altar by the Jordan (Joshua 22)

The land has been apportioned, and the eastern tribes have fulfilled their responsibilities. Joshua now dismisses them to return home. The time and sacrifice has not been without its rewards, as they return with much wealth from the spoils of Canaan, which Joshua urges them to share with those who remained to take care of their land and families (verse 8). Before they go, Joshua exhorts them to follow God's law wholeheartedly (verse 5). So it comes as a great shock when word comes back that they have built a large altar beside the Jordan River apparently contrary to God's explicit commands (compare Deuteronomy 12). In their zeal, a war party forms at Shiloh to deal with this brazen transgression. Before heading off to battle, a delegation of tribal leaders, headed by Phinehas, the son of the high priest, is sent to find out just why they have done this. The delegation reminds them of some of Israel's past transgressions, and suggests that perhaps it would be better if they came over to the western lands after all.

The tribes explain, however, that things are not how they look to the western delegation. They say they built it as a "replica of the altar of the Lord which our fathers made" (Joshua 22:28), i.e., apparently a copy of the stone one that had been set up at Mount Ebal (compare Joshua 8:30-31). And, most importantly, this altar, they maintain, was not to be used for sacrifices as the original was, but rather to serve as a witness and reminder in years to come to Israelites on both sides of the Jordan that they too are a part of Israel, who also worship the true God (Joshua 22:27-28). The explanation is quite acceptable to Phinehas and the tribal leaders.

They return to Shiloh, and a civil war is averted (verses 30-34).

God's Perfect Revelation; His Deliverance in Time of Trouble (Psalms 19-21)

Psalms 19 is a wisdom psalm in which David praises God's creation and instruction. David calls attention to the heavens because the sun, the moon, and the stars declare the Creator's glorious activity. The radiance of the sun and the orderly appearance of the moon and stars bear witness to the existence of a Master Designer (see also Romans 1:20).

Verse 4 of Psalm 19 reads variously, “their line has gone out” (perhaps meaning orbit) and “their voice goes out” (NRSV). Even in English, the word “line” can denote a geometric line, a line of text or the text an actor is given to speak aloud. David mentions that the voice of the celestial bodies can be heard everywhere (verse 3). “The poem talks of hearing the glory of God. It declares that behind the whole majesty of nature there is sound, the sound of the Word of God. The whole creation, even without the use of words, sounds forth the divine Word; when put into Greek, this is the word Logos that we meet in John 1:1” (George Knight, Psalms, The Daily Study Bible Series, comments on Psalm 19:1-6).

Some see in these verses the idea that, prior to His written revelation in Scripture, God formed the constellations to communicate the story of His plan for humanity—imagery that was corrupted in pagan mythology (see, for instance, E.W. Bullinger’s book *The Witness of the Stars* and E. Raymond Capt’s book *The Glory of the Stars*). Yet even apart from that, the heavens certainly have a powerful message to communicate. As verse 1 shows, they demonstrate the sublime majesty, creativity, genius and power of God.

David compares the sun to a bridegroom, cheerfully leaving his chamber, and to the strength of a champion prepared for his race. “Nothing,” he adds, “is hidden from the sun’s radiance and strength,” just as nothing is hidden from the glory of God. It is interesting to consider that in the New Testament, Yeshua, God the Word made flesh, is referred to as both the “bridegroom” (Matthew 25:1-10) and the “light of the world” (John 8:12)—His followers also have this latter distinction through reflecting the “light” of His character (Matthew 5:14).

Just as God (both Father and Son) is brilliant in glory and illuminating, so also is God’s law.

Indeed, the psalm now moves from the heavenly revelation to the written revelation of God. The word “law” is translated from the Hebrew torah and means instruction (verses 7-10). “This portion of the psalm “presents six words for the law of God—law, testimony, statutes, commandment, fear, and judgments; six evaluations of the law—perfect, sure, right, pure, clean, and true; and six results—converting the soul, making wise the simple, rejoicing the heart, enlightening the eyes, enduring forever, and righteous altogether” (Nelson Study Bible, note on vv. 7-10). Curiously, the terms here are thoroughly elaborated on exactly 100 psalms later—in Psalm 119.

Consideration of God’s majesty as revealed in the heavens and the stark perfection of His law, David is reminded of his own inadequacies. He asks a searching question, “Who can understand his [own] errors?” (verse 12). God says that a man’s heart is desperately wicked and that only He really understands it (Jeremiah 17:9). Since a man can’t get to the bottom of his nature and rid himself of his faults, God must intervene to forgive him of his shortcomings and help him to obey (Psalm 19:12). God’s power can enable us to stay away from deliberate sins and reveal the secret faults over the course of our years of seeking to follow His way of life (verse 13; 139:23-24).

David prays that his words and thoughts will be pleasing in God’s sight, similar to the request he makes in Psalm 141:3: “Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch over the door of my lips.” Such a “guard” is the Holy Spirit reminding us of right and wrong, which we learn from our study of God’s Word. The Spirit helps us to do what we should. But the choice to do the right and the effort to control the lips remains up to us.

Mat 12:22 – 13:23

12:23 Is not this the son of David?

The miracles Yeshua had been performing in God’s name were beginning to have an effect on the minds of the people. Many of them were now considering that He was the Messiah. (The term “son of David” was a euphemism for the Messiah.)

12:25 And Jesus knew their thoughts ...

Whose thoughts? When closely examined, the text indicates He is considering the thoughts of the people (in verse 23), not the Pharisees. His ensuing comments are directed toward them more than their leaders.

12:28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Again, the direct connection is made between the miracles He is doing and their specific purpose, to declare to them that the Kingdom of God is being offered. There is no argument as to the validity of these being “real miracles.” The discussion at hand is by whose authority these miracles are being done. If by God, then this was there opportunity to usher in His Kingdom on earth. It is interesting that Scripture tells us that many of the physical problems people were experiencing at that time, were directly attributed to the work of Satan or a demon.

The time period of the Kingdom offer extended for a brief while after Yeshua’s death. Peter reiterated the offer to his kinsmen. Peter let them know that if they were to accept the message of Yeshua, He would immediately return and usher in the Kingdom:

Acts 3:18-21 – But those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. And he shall send Yeshua Messiah, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.

NOTE: One of the criticisms of the “New Testament” until recent times, has been the great mention of demonic activity within its pages, in light of the fact that there was little other historical evidence that witnessed to such things in the Second Temple period. This changed with the Dead Sea Scrolls. Among the parchments (dated about 100 years prior to Yeshua), are found detailed instructions on casting away demons, using either chants or the placing of an amulet upon the body. Many of these demons were directly connected to physical ailments. (Scrolls 4Q560 and 11Q11.)

12:29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?

The idea of binding a spiritual enemy being, before accomplishing an earthly deed, is found both in Scripture (see study on [Daniel 10](#))

12:30 He that is not with me is against me;

On the surface, this would seem to contradict the following words from Yeshua:

Luke 9:49-50 – And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Yeshua said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.

It is important to consider here, that Yeshua is not telling John that, “it’s OK as long as they are using my name.” Yeshua had already said that this is no guarantee of anything:

Matthew 7:22-23 – Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

The context of Luke 9:49-50 is again that of miracles being performed as a sign that the Kingdom of God was being offered. Yeshua evidently knew that the men John was referring to, were also performing these miracles for this same purpose, otherwise they would have fallen under the condemnation of His words of Matthew 7:22-23. Therefore, even though they weren't directly "in the camp," they were "on the same team," as the miracles they were performing were properly grounded in the Torah's Kingdom message and God's authority.

This situation is remarkably similar to an occurrence in Moses' time:

Numbers 11:26-29 – But there remained two of the men in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, and the name of the other Medad: and the spirit rested upon them; and they were of them that were written, but went not out unto the tabernacle: and they prophesied in the camp. And there ran a young man, and told Moses, and said, Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the camp. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto him, Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the LORD'S people were prophets, and that the LORD would put his spirit upon them!

Returning to Matthew 12:30, Yeshua is speaking in the context of His message of the Kingdom offer being rejected. The Pharisees, who attributed His works to Satan, were making a conscious decision to discard His claim that the authority behind the miracles was God, even though they were being given a taste of what was one day to come in full. Thus, they were wilfully rejecting the work of the Holy Spirit (the Ruach haKodesh – through whom Yeshua's works were performed). They were therefore aligning themselves against Yeshua, and with the kingdom of Satan, in this grand spiritual battle.

12:32 ... blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men

The proof that what Yeshua was doing was of God, was not that He said so, nor was it the miracles themselves. (Satan and his demons can claim to be doing things of God and perform wonderful deeds.) Rather, Yeshua's "litmus test" for the Pharisees was Torah.

He had previously told them to go properly understand what was meant in the verse, "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice." Why did He tell them to do this? Had they done so, they would have learned that they were seeking their own righteousness and not submitting to God's. (This is a purpose and function of Torah.) They would have then known Yeshua for who He was and His works as being of God. Rather than doing thing however, these Pharisees choose to view themselves as righteous, walk away from the Kingdom offer, and attribute the work of the Ruach haKodesh to Satan.

The warning of the "unforgivable sin" is given in the book of Hebrews, only in a different setting. (As Yeshua has died and resurrected by this time, which holds additional significance). Again, this has to do with experiencing the work of the Ruach and rejecting it, when you have enough understanding to know better:

Hebrews 6:4-6 – For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

There is a bit of a paradox here that needs to be addressed. Although Yeshua says that this generation is condemned, later in Acts chapter 3 (see above) Peter tells these people that they still have yet one more chance. Anyone cognizant of the Hebrew Scriptures knows that this is common. The prophets, on more than one occasion, told the people they were doomed as they would not listen, while still preaching repentance to them.

12:39 An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign;

It is a fact of Scripture that some generations end up cursed, while others especially blessed. Those in the position to receive the greatest blessings from God, and who fail Him, end up in the former category.

The other generation in Scripture, cursed in such a fashion, was that which came out of Egypt. They received the offer of the Kingdom and the written Torah. Those in Matthew's narrative, receive the Kingdom offer and the walking, talking, Torah – Yeshua.

12:43-45 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none ... Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

This generation had the greatest preacher of the Kingdom in their midst. Yeshua's miracles were not only physical cures, they were spiritual gains, each contributing to the binding of Satan and his own legions of angels (demons). The great physician was making them well by bringing God's light into the world, forcing out the darkness of the enemy, and ushering in the Kingdom of God. Here was there chance! Their rejection of this opportunity is worse for them than if He had never come and preached to them at all. For now they will be beyond repentance (i.e., Hebrews 6:4).

12:50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven,

What is the "Will of God" that each of us, without exception, is to do?

Learn of the "Image of God," as presented in the Torah, and become conformed to it

Grow in intimacy with Him, by following the commandments of His Torah, and going beyond the "letter of Torah," by performing acts of kindness in our day to day activities

INTRODUCTION

The subject of the Kingdom of God is the essential lesson of the Bible, beginning with creation account in Genesis and its final realization in the book of Revelation.

The message of the Kingdom is the message of the Gospel:

Mark 1:14 – Now after that John was put in prison, Yeshua came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

A study of the Kingdom is one of the more interesting and complex that a Bible student can undertake. Not only are there many aspects to the Kingdom, but there are also different "levels" at which one can investigate all of that Scripture presents and hints at.

A detailed description of these aspects and levels is found in our Revelation study. For now, we will simply say that a study of the Kingdom can be approached at these levels:

A basic level where we are concerned mostly with the literal text

A level where we seek to understand some of the deeper truths

A mystical level

Such mystical teachings will mostly be left to our Revelation study. For now, we will provide two examples. One can be found in the book of Zechariah. The prophet, speaking of this time, says that this is when the “name” of the Lord will be made one:

Zechariah 14:9 – And the LORD shall be king over all the earth: in that day shall there be one LORD, and his name one.

Another, found in the Talmud, says that the Temple represents the Kingdom of God:

The goal of Creation is that the Kingdom of God (represented by the Temple) shall be established on earth, as it is in heaven; and finally, the name of the Messiah, i.e., the assurance that God’s purpose will ultimately be achieved.¹

In this analysis of Matthew, we will remain focused on the more basic aspects of the Kingdom, looking to a degree at some of its deeper truths. We will first present an overview of the Kingdom, then examine some of Yeshua’s parables from this chapter of Matthew as well as the other gospels.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The Kingdom of God is spoken of throughout Scripture and in Jewish writings as an everlasting Kingdom where God and those who are faithful to Him exist in harmony. The Kingdom of God is also called the Kingdom of Heaven (especially in the book of Matthew), as “heaven” is often substituted for “God” in Jewish texts.

Depending on context, the Kingdom can mean one or both of two “time periods.” It can be said to be the 1000-year Messianic Kingdom on earth, and/or eternity in Olam Haba, the world to come. The former, a time when there is still some degree of sin and death, leads directly into the latter, where sin and death will be no more:

1 Corinthians 15:24-26 – Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

Both the Tenakh and “New Testament” show us that the Kingdom is also the restored kingdom of Israel. King David was promised that the Kingdom of Israel, established through his offspring, would one day be this everlasting Kingdom of God:

2 Samuel 7:8-16 – “Now then, tell my servant David, `This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men of the earth. And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies. “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men. But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it

away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me ; your throne will be established forever.”

Mark 11:9-10 – And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna;

Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

Acts 1:6 – Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?”

THE “KINGDOM” OF SATAN

Counter to the Kingdom and God’s plan to establish it, is Satan and his efforts to establish his own unholy Kingdom. The book of Revelation shows the final chapters of this story, including mention of the Kingdom coming at the time of Satan’s defeat:

Revelation 12:10 – And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Messiah: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night.

Perhaps the earliest reference to the battle between these two kingdoms is the dialogue between God and the serpent in the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 3:15 – And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

Those in opposition to God’s truth can be said to be supporting Satan and his kingdom:

John 8:44 – Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Revelation 2:9 – I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.

It is important to note here, that the two verses above are often misused to say that the Pharisees were blind to who Yeshua was, because they “kept the Law.” Nothing could be further from the truth, as Yeshua Himself said that the Tenakh (Old Testament) spoke of Him (Luke 24:44-45), and He Himself kept the Torah and said none of it was done away with (Matthew 5:17-21).

The correct understanding of these statements has to do with the fact that many of the Pharisees (who were the most powerful religious group of the time, but not the only one) had misused Torah and established their own righteousness, based on their ability to do the works of the Torah, and/or their simply being born Jews. Both Yeshua and Paul castigate such people and say that this is why they missed Messiah. A correct understanding of Torah, resulting in obeying the commandments of God in faith (i.e., Hebrews 4:2), will point a person to Yeshua, as He is the goal of the Torah (Romans 10:4)²

Our Revelation study shows that the “battles” between these kingdoms are waged both in the heavenly realms as well as on earth. In the earthly realm, Satan’s kingdom is identified with Edom, the (non-believing) world, Babylon or Rome. God’s Kingdom is associated with Israel, and specifically with David or Jacob:

Luke 1:33 – And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

THE KINGDOM PRIOR TO YESHUA

God’s work to establish His Kingdom can be seen by tracing the “faithful remnant” that has existed in every generation. With Abraham, he set aside a specific people, Israel, to be His “Messiah,” that would bring about the Kingdom. The promise continued through Jacob and his sons, the 12 tribes of Israel.

Finally, with Moses and the children of Israel who were taken out of Egypt, the opportunity came to usher in the Messianic age. Due to the unbelief of the people, (including the sins of the Golden Calf and the episode of the 12 spies), this chance was forfeited.

The earthly kingdom of Israel was established at David’s time, with the building of the Temple by Solomon. As seen above, a promise was made that this would be an everlasting kingdom — but there was still much to occur before that would happen.

THE KINGDOM AT YESHUA’S TIME

As we have discussed earlier in this study, another offer of the Kingdom came again, with the arrival of Yeshua:

Matthew 4:17 – From that time Yeshua began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 10:7 – And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 12:28 – But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

Once more however, the sin of the people prevented this from happening, although the offer continued to be extended after Yeshua’s death (Acts 3), probably until around the time the Temple was destroyed, at which point it was again withdrawn.

There will not be another offer of the Kingdom, dependent on the faithfulness of human beings. God will “forcibly” usher in His Kingdom at a future date, as seen in the book of Revelation (as well as Scriptures such as Matthew chapters 24 and 25).

THE KINGDOM TODAY

Although there is a literal earthly and heavenly Kingdom to come, there is also a degree to which we can “experience” the Kingdom in our lifetime. The “New Testament” states that those who are following God in faith are said to already belong to the Kingdom. This is similar to saying that although we are presently “saved,” we are not yet experiencing the “totality” of that salvation until we are actually with God.

As the Kingdom is a time where we are “one with God,” those things that would presently be considered “miraculous,” would be the regular state of being in the Kingdom. Yeshua’s twelve apostles could be said to have been “walking in the Kingdom,” as they had superior God-given insight into the Scriptures, and were able to perform open miracles (those outside of the laws of nature).

This idea is not foreign to Jewish interpretation of Scripture, however it is definitely belongs in the area of mystical studies. As a for instance however, consider the following from a recent book on Nachmanides, one of the most famous teachers in Jewish history.

Teaching on Deuteronomy 11:22, he says:

Possibly this cleaving includes the remembering of God and continually loving Him, that is, don't separate your thoughts from Him while you walk on the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. Such an individual will relate to people, but his heart, his innermost thoughts and feelings are always facing God. Furthermore, possibly the souls of such elevated individuals are bound up with the mystical life source, even while alive, for they themselves are a dwelling place for the Shekhinah.³

Conversely, the kingdom of Satan, has its own "opportunity" for the miraculous. Some of the more common occurrences seen today, are the actions of popular "psychics," seen on television and in magazine advertisements. Although many of these people are charlatans, some do possess uncanny power to reveal hidden truths about people. Offering people a "shortcut" into the spiritual realm is one of Satan's oldest tricks.

It should be noted however, that not all things done in opposition to God, are blatantly "unbiblical." Yeshua warned (Matthew chapter 7), that there would even be those who did things in His name that He would turn away.

Scripture teaches us that we are to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom (i.e., the "Our Father" [Matthew 6] which, as we have seen, is a typical Jewish prayer.) Yeshua Himself prayed for this time in terms of our unification with God:

John 17:21-23 – That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

THE KINGDOM IN MATTHEW 13

Matthew 13 is the single chapter of the "New Testament" with the most references to the Kingdom of God. Here, Yeshua speaks of the Kingdom, using a series of parables. When asked by His disciples why He spoke in parables, He replied:

Matthew 13:11 – ... Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

Here, Yeshua is not saying that there was some elite group that could understand while others could not. Every person has the choice of responding to God in faith, and receiving greater understanding of all of the word of God. The key is humility (i.e., Moses was a great prophet due to his humble nature. Yeshua compare this characteristic to the faith of little children).

Matthew 18:4 – Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

On the other hand, the pitfalls are many, including any religious doctrine not based in God's revealed will as found in His Torah:

Matthew 7:21 – Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

There are several other direct and indirect references to the Kingdom of God, in the Gospel of Matthew, the other Gospels and the epistles. We will also examine these as part of this study section.

Yeshua offers eight parables in Matthew 13, which can be divided into several categories:

Acceptance and rejection of the Kingdom (13:3-8)

Growth of the Kingdom (13:31-32 & 33), with possible reference to evil within it

Evil mixed in the Kingdom (13:24-30 & 47-48)

The Kingdom being worth everything to be part of (13:44 & 45-46)

The Kingdom with regard to teachers (13:52)

THE FIRST PARABLE (v. 3-8)

In two places, Yeshua explains the meaning of His parables to some degree. In verses 19-23 he explains this first parable, by showing four possible scenarios involving people who hear the gospel message of the Kingdom. The interpretation is as follows:

Some won't understand the message when it is presented. Why they don't Yeshua doesn't exactly say. However, it could be that they had given little time to learning about the things of God, and when the "secrets" of the Kingdom (see verses 11 & 35) were presented, they were clueless as to the importance. This lesson is reflected in the opposite (positive) sense, in the two short parables in verses 44-46, where Yeshua shows that the Kingdom is worth more than anything this life has to offer, and the wise man would give up anything of this life for it.

The second person is one who grasps the message, but is overcome by certain "negative" influences (i.e., incorrect doctrine from others) and pressured into letting go of it.

The third type of person also has some understanding, but in this case is overcome by certain "positive" things (i.e., love for the cares of the world) and also loses hold.

Lastly, are those who are prepared, understand, and take hold.

THE SECOND PARABLE (v. 24-30)

The second parable is also another that Yeshua gives some explanation to (in verses 37-43). These verses are really a synopsis of what is seen in the book of Revelation, which is in turn based on prophecies from the Tenakh (Old Testament) showing God's vengeance being carried out by His angels of judgment. Here, the concept of belonging to one of two Kingdoms is seen with the reference to Children of the Kingdom and Children of the wicked one. Note that the latter, though part of "Satan's kingdom" are also said to be in the Kingdom of God, until it is time for them to be cast out.

Interestingly, even those in Satan's kingdom are serving the will of God:

Revelation 17:17 – For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

THE THIRD AND FOURTH PARABLES (v. 31-32 & 33)

These short parables are the most peculiar. The first, involving the mustard seed, would indicate that the Kingdom of God would grow enormously despite its humble beginnings. However, the reference to the birds coming to land in the branches may be an indication of evil in the Kingdom. The latter parable involves leaven, which is also normally a metaphor for sin or evil. In this case as well, it may seem that Yeshua is saying that evil spreads throughout the Kingdom.