

## THE EARLY PARABLES OF JESUS

### Message 11

Passage: Matthew 11:6-19

Words: 6407

INTRO: We have come to the last parable in the early parables of Jesus. As I see these parables, they fall into three groups. The early parables deal with the transition from the OT to the Church age. The second group deals with the Church age. The third group deals with what will happen to the Jews and with the return of Christ.

We have seen that Jesus spoke in His first extended discourse to those common people and His disciples sitting on that hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee. In His first parable He said, "You are the salt of the earth!" We are looking far beyond Jerusalem and Israel to the whole world. Then He said, "You are the light of the world."

Later in the sermon He likened a city with two gates to the world. In the city walls was a narrow gate and a wide gate. All those fleeing destruction went out of one of those gates. All thought the gate they exited the city from led to glory. By far the most of them were deceived. Only a few found the narrow gate and actually went to glory. The reason was that there are false prophets in that city that direct people to the wide gate. In the parable that closes that section He likened those who entered the wide gate to a man who built his house on the sand. The one who entered the narrow gate He likened to a man who built his house on a rock.

After the Sermon on the Mount John's disciples came to ask Him why they and the Pharisees fasted and Jesus' disciples did not and Jesus said it was because He was still with them. Like a bridegroom's friends are not sad as long as the groom is with them, so His disciples did not fast as long as He was with them. In a parable He then said you do not put an unshrunk piece of cloth on an old garment to patch it because it would make the tear worse. Nor do you put new wine into old wine bottles, or the wine will burst them and both the wine and the bottles are ruined. Thus He indicated a new age was coming and it would not suit to patch up the old with it. And the new age was the Church age and it is very different from the time of God's work with Israel in the OT.

And now we are at the last parable that deals with this transition time.

## XI. THE PARABLE OF PLAYING CHILDREN

### A. The Parable

Well, we go to Matthew 11. In chapter 13, Jesus begins another set of parables, most of which are found in Matthew 13. He is coming to a very important part of His life on earth. Shortly after this, about 12 times He tells the disciples He will die, and for all that they did not seem to get it. But just before that He gives them the parables of the Church age, or as I have called them in another series, the parables of the interim age.

So let us consider now this last parable of the transition stage from where God deals with Israel in particular, to where He will deal with the Church. We go to Matthew 11 beginning at verse 16:

16 *"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,*

17 *"and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.'*

That is the parable.

### B. The Setting

So we ask, just what does this parable mean? And to get some idea we first want to observe the setting. We go then to verse 1 of this same chapter.

1 *Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.*

Jesus has just sent out the 12 to teach and to preach. And now He is beginning His fourth preaching tour. For the setting we begin at verse 2:

2 *And when John had heard in prison about the works of Christ,  
he sent two of his disciples*

3 *and said to Him, "Are You the Coming One, or do we look for  
another?"*

John is in prison. He has been there for some time. I expect that he ministered around 6 months, maybe a little more and then he was imprisoned because he reprimanded Herod for living with a divorced woman. Well, this woman had been Herod's brother Philip's wife but she had divorced him and married Herod. Her name was Herodias and she despised John and later had him killed.

Now John knew where they were in the prophetic scheme of things and he could not figure out why in the world he was in prison and why Jesus would leave him there. The kingdom of God, according to the prophet Daniel, was now just a few years ahead of them and he is sitting in jail. And it seems that John can finally handle it no more so he sends a few disciples to Jesus to check if He is indeed the promised Messiah. And we look at Jesus' answer from verse 4 and on:

4 *Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things  
which you hear and see:*

5 *"The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and  
the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor  
have the gospel preached to them.*

6 *"And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."*

Over the years I have often used this passage to encourage those who are in some difficulty in life. That is where John was and he was beginning to doubt who Jesus really is. We can get to such a place. And Jesus said to John's disciples: "You go tell John the things you see and hear. I am doing miracles. Lame people walk. Lepers are made cleansed and made well. The dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them. You tell John all this. This should let him know who I am. And in my words He then said something like this: "Oh,

by the way, tell John 'Blessed is the man who is not offended in Me.'

It is possible to become offended in the Lord when He does not do the things we think He should. We think He should heal us or our friends. We think we should have things better than we do. We might secretly think, "I am a Christian and seek to live right, and this is what I get." And we can become offended.

Well, a short while later John hears a soldier coming and he is not there to release him from jail. He is there to release his head from his body. And John is dead. Jesus knew what lay ahead of John. So we go now to verse 7:

*7 As they departed, Jesus began to say to the multitudes concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind?"*

*8 "But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed, those who wear soft clothing are in kings' houses."*

When the people had heard of John's preaching, they went out to see him. They had heard interesting things. They had heard scary things, but these things had enough power on them to cause them to want to go see for themselves. There was a preacher out in the wilderness and he was preaching sin. And people who went came under conviction and they repented and confessed their sins and got baptized. That is scary.

Maybe Jesus is saying by indicating that they might have gone to see a reed shaken in the wind, as though they went to see a man whose doctrine was all wonky. He was driven to and from by winds of weird doctrine. And Jesus is saying, "No, that is not what you went to see. You went to see somebody who could preach to the heart and stir up joy, a joy that you yourselves wanted to experience even if it would be costly."

And then Jesus said, "But what did you go to see? A man clothed in soft garments? No, you don't go into the wilderness to see those dressed in soft clothing. But what ailed

you to go out into the wilderness? What did you go to see? You are not known to go out to listen to preachers, never mind in the wilderness."

Then Jesus said this in verses 9-10:

9 *"But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet.*

10 *"For this is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.'*

But let me tell you what happens when you have something like the preaching of John. It is abnormal. People were dealing with sin! Now you do not go somewhere to hear preaching about sin, so what drew people to go to listen to John? Let me tell you how I see it. You cannot have a thorough dealing with sin without great joy resulting from that. I do not doubt there were testimonies all over. And people began to say, "What has happened to so and so?" Look at these people. We have never seen something like this!" And others said, "Well, they went to listen to John the Baptist. Do you remember Zacharias and Elizebeth's son? Remember what happened when he was born?" And they said, "Yes, we remember but we haven't heard from him since." Others might have said, "No, I am 25 years old and have never heard of him." And maybe they were told, "Well, let me tell you about his birth." And so they are told. And then this one says, "Now he is preaching in the wilderness and people repent of their sins and confess them and look at the results!" And soon more and more people go to listen to John and more and more come away to live in newfound joy.

Let me show you what can happen from a story from our own country of Canada. I want to read from an article I found on the internet. The article comes from the Reformed Church In America dated February 1972. The contributor is John J. Opmeer and the title is, "Has Revival Come To Canada?" It goes like this:

*The Seventies are rapidly becoming known as a Decade of Revival. The fires of a Holy Spirit led awakening are burning*

around the globe. In 1970 it was Ashbury, Kentucky. Southern California followed. 'Then the fire spread to many areas in the world, particularly affecting young people. Now the news is spreading that revival fires are burning in Canada. It has started, not perhaps where one would expect it, in the Prairy (sic) City of Saskatoon.

"All these years I've been building my church, and now I've seen everything I built completely crumble. I saw my board members, my deacons, my Sunday School teachers - the best people I had - all coming forward to get right with God. Then I saw God take that crumbled structure and build a real church, HIS church. It's beautiful to behold." That is how pastor William L. McLeod, of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Saskatoon, described the revival that began in his church.

It all started on October 13, when evangelists Ralph and Lou Sutura, 37-year old twins from Mansfield, Ohio, arrived at Ebenezer for a 10-day crusade. The congregation has been praying for this crusade during the past two years. The Suterases brought with them a team of lay people who told what God had done during meetings in Prince George, B.C., earlier that month (Let me add that my wife got saved a few years later in Prince George in Sutura meetings). Rather unexpectedly, people from many denominations started pouring in, and soon a dozen congregations were co-operating. The University Drive Christian and Missionary Alliance Church canceled its annual missionary convention to participate. The nightly meetings continued through November, and were moved three times to larger quarters to accommodate the crowds. Finally the city's largest sanctuary, which belongs to the United Church of Canada, was used. Following the pattern of other revivals, the meetings featured little singing and only brief sermons. Mostly, people simply got up to share what God was doing in their lives. Numerous conversions were reported. People testified their praise to God, vowed new dedication, confessed sin, offered forgiveness, and told of deliverance from selfishness and other sins. There is much prayer and sharing.

The local impact has been tremendous. Although the revival has received little attention from the news media elsewhere, the Saskatoon "Star Phoenix" noted the local merchants were besieged I (by) repentant shoplifters wanting (to) make restitutions. Principals and teachers remarked about the dramatic changes in student behaviour. Police said the behavior of young troublemakers was changing radically. There was dramatic decline in drug use beginning with the revival meeting'.

As far as the churches are concerned, the revival has brought real unity. Denominational barriers dissolved. Love prevailed. Catholics, Lutherans, Baptists, Nazarenes and others prayed, wept, and shared together as if they had been in the same family for years. Crusade textbooks have been set aside in favor of flexibility. There are no structures or schedules, "thus freeing the Holy Spirit," says Ralph Sutura. There are no counselors. Instead, volunteers are asked to pray with those who express needs.

The movement has been contagious. People have come from all over Canada to observe and participate, in many cases sparking revival back home. Chaplain W. Gordon Searle, of Toronto's Central Baptist Seminary, arrived skeptical about what was happening, but went home revived. At his invitation, the Rev. McLeod and a team staked by a Saskatoon business-man flew to Toronto and related their experiences to the seminary's 80 students. Two full days of spiritual outpouring later, the students themselves began sending out teams to scores of Toronto area churches.

There is ample evidence that the revival continues and is spreading. "In 35 years of ministry -I have never witnessed such a spiritual movement as this," remarked Central's president, Dr. Donald Loveday. Similar sentiments were uttered by presidents Kenneth Hanna, of the 150-student Winnipeg Bible College, and Alvin Martin, of the 225-student Canadian Bible College in Regina. A team led by pastor Boldt, of the Christian and Missionary Alliance church in Saskatoon, met with people gathered for an all-night prayer meeting in an Edmonton church. "The same thing happened", he said.

*"People were struck down in deep conviction. They trembled and wept in deep remorse over their sinfulness." Further south, at Wetaskiwin ' ' Alberta, a church was already packed out when pastor Boldt and his team arrived in town. People began weeping and coming forward to the altar during the opening song. And yet, the revival is definitely not personality-centered. According to Leslie Tarr, of the Toronto seminary, there is a three-fold emphasis in the revival: self-crucifixion, the Holy Spirit's ministry, and the Lordship of Christ, end quote.*

That is a small sample of what happens when God steps down. It is without doubt that John was that kind of a preacher. So Jesus said, "What did you go to see?" He wanted them to remember John and his preaching. And then in verse 11 Jesus says:

11 *"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*

I ask you, in the eyes of the Lord, what kind of man is John? Well, he is an incredible man! But let me ask you now, in the eyes of John, what kind of a man is he? Useless! Sitting in jail! And we ought to thank the Lord for letting us see behind the curtain of a great man's life for just a moment.

But look now at verse 12:

12 *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.*

Now here is a rather puzzling verse. The violence began at John's preaching and it was still ongoing when Jesus spoke these words. Now it says the kingdom of heaven suffers violence. The word translated 'violence' is *biazo*. Turn to Luke 16:16. This is the only other time this word is used in the NT and it is translated 'pressed' in this verse:



*Lu 16:16 "The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it.*

Our verse then says, "...and the violent take it by force." Those who are pressing into the kingdom take hold of it and hang on to it. A number of commentaries gave the picture of when an army took a city by storm. There is a relentless attacking until the city is in their hands. Here is the picture I get. John preached. He preached sin. He preached righteousness and he preached that without repentance everyone would go to hell. His preaching brought such conviction of sin that harlots and tax collectors, those living in deep wickedness came under such conviction that they would not back down even at the public confession of sin and open repentance. The fear of God took such hold that nothing would keep them from doing what must be done to enter the kingdom of heaven.

In a parable a while ago we saw a woman who dared come into a Pharisee's house because Jesus was there. She brought very expensive perfume and put it on Jesus' feet and she wiped them with her hair, tears streaming down her face. Why? Gratitude for forgiveness from sin. Oh to see such a day! Oh that God would step down and make us tremble and cause us to lose all fear of man and to openly confess sin and get right with God. As of yet, it seems we are far from it. Such was the preaching of John.

13 *"For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.*

14 *"And if you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come.*

15 *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*

For the sake of time I won't comment much on verse 14, other than to say that John came in the spirit and power of Elijah (Luke 1:17). But we note here that all the prophets prophesied until John. John was the last of the OT prophets. He closed out an old age. Jesus was bringing in a new.

Sixteen times in the NT it says, "He that has ears to" or "an ear to hear, let him hear." (Comment if time)

It is with this as the setting that we come to our parable so look at the next verses:

16 *"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,*

17 *"and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.'*

18 *"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'*

Well, all that is the setting of this parable.

### C. The Interpretation

That brings us to consider now the interpretation of this parable. Notice that verse 16 starts with the word *but*. That is a conjunction that indicates a contrast. So what is contrasted with the words "...to what shall I liken this generation..."? Well Luke adds some words not found in Matthew. As I see it they come between verse 15 of Matthew 11 and verse 16. If I would insert Luke's words it would read like this:

*Matthew 11:15 "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"*

*Luke 7:29-30*

29 *And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John.*

30 *But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.*

*Matthew 11:16-17:*

16 *"But to what shall I liken this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their companions,*

17 *"and saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not lament.'*

I think that when Jesus refers to 'this generation', He is speaking of the religious world of Judaism as represented here by the Pharisees. What was that closing age of the OT like? And Jesus then uses this parable. The Messiah has come and the religious world has rejected Him.

What was this religious world like? Jesus likens them to children in the market place. So I expect this is a picture of a day when parents take their children to town and they are shopping. And the children are playing during that time. And it is one of those days when nothing is appealing. There are times when children play and play. Parents love those days. Then there are days when they are bored and you can't find anything to entertain them. You try this and that and the other thing, but nothing is pleasing. Parents with children know what those days are like, and Jesus says, "This generation is like that. This is an age like that."

Well, in this parable there was a group of children trying to get the others interested in playing. They played the flute. I expect they are playing wedding. And there should be dancing and joy during the festivities. But the others are curling up their noses and cannot be enticed to play.

Well, something joyful did not work, so now they are playing it is funeral time. During those days at funerals, sometimes criers were brought to the funeral. Those who were mourning needed to mourn, but they sat there stoically. You know how it is at funerals. Sometimes someone is moved to weeping, and it sets others off to weeping who were already close to that state. So these criers would bring the mourning out that was needed to help get that out of their system that needed to come out. And so these children tried that. They played funeral, but there was no interest.

And Jesus said, "This generation is like that." John was closing out an old age. He and his disciples fasted. That is what you do in sad times and in times of need. This is likened to the children that wanted to play funeral. So look at it in verse 18:

18 *"For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'*

What did the religious world of Jesus' day do when John came? They curled up their nose. They said, "He has a demon." Now here we get the general response to John's preaching. John preached sin and righteousness and repentance. How did that generation respond? They demonized him. Think of the talk among the religious leaders. Without doubt they are jealous of all the common people flocking to hear John. Some of them even went to get baptized to try to enter into the popularity of John with the people. And John called them a brood of snakes. He saw clear through them. How do you think that went over in Jerusalem among the religious leaders?

Well, six months later Jesus began to preach. He did not fast. He sat with people, ate with them and drank with them. He did all that which is socially pleasant. Oh yes, he preached repentance too, but he was not out in the wilderness like John. He sat with the people. What do you think Jesus preaching was like? He preached all over the land. What did He preach? He preached sin and righteousness and repentance and faith.

How did the religious leaders like His preaching? Without question they were pricked in their conscience but they did not want to pay the price of repentance, which required confession of sin. And like the children who wanted to play wedding they curled up their noses at him. And this is what Jesus said of them in verse 19:

19 *"The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'"*

What is the long and the short of it in the generation that existed at that time? You couldn't do anything right. Was there all kinds of religion? Oh yes! Did they profess to know God and want God? Oh yes! But there is one thing they did not want. They did not want to deal with their sin! And when you do not want to deal with sin and it is pointed out, what do you do? Get rid of the one pointing out sin. They got rid of John the Baptist and they got rid of Jesus too.

On the other hand there were the outcasts. They were the tax collectors and harlots and gentiles. When sin was preached and righteousness and repentance, they took the kingdom by storm and refused to let go.

Now let me point something out on the fact that they called Jesus a winebibber. You see, it says He ate and drank with sinners. So, He went to the bars and drank with them, right? Well, what is a winebibber? It is someone who is often by the wine. Let me quote once more from the messages I did called "Wine And The Bible":

*Then in Matthew 11:16-17, Jesus questions, not John, but the Jewish people... They are like children that cannot be satisfied with anything. First they want to play having a happy time, and there are no takers. Then they want to play something sad, and still no takers.*

*Jesus said, "You Jews are like that." John the Baptist came neither eating or drinking, and you say, "He has a devil. We won't play with him." They went out into the desert to see and hear John and they missed his message entirely. They were not happy with him, so they were like the children who said, "We won't play with you". Then they came to Jesus, the One John had told them about, and they found him eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners and they were disgusted with Him too! And so, like the children in the illustration, they said, "We won't play with you either."*

*Now I want us to notice something very carefully. You see, there are hints in the NT that Jesus' and the disciples did not use fermented wine at all and we have one right here in this text. Note what the Jews said about*

Jesus, "He is a glutton and a winebibber." Note very carefully what they did not say. They did not say, "He is a glutton and a drunk." Someone who eats too much is a glutton. Someone who drinks too much fermented wine is a drunkard. But they do not call him a drunkard in this passage. Why did they not accuse Him of drunkenness? I think it is because He never drank fermented wine and the accusation would be totally unfounded.

So I think what we have here is some evidence that Jesus did not drink fermented wine at all. I have no doubt that if He had, they would have called Him a glutton and a drunkard. Their word for his eating habits was an exaggeration; a glutton. We know that He was never a glutton. If He had had a social drink of fermented wine, and they exaggerated, no doubt they would have called Him a drunkard. But since Jesus did not drink fermented grape juice, He is simply called an oinopotees, a wine bibber.

I think that this word, oinopotees, speaks of one who is always by the wine, which in Jesus' case was, I fully believe, grape juice. If I were to give an equivalent in our day, it would be to accuse someone of being a 'coffee shopper', someone who always sits in the coffee shop and discusses every last bit of news. Many years ago, when I was in the logging business, they called it 'chewing the rag'. I don't know if it still has the same name, but that is an interesting name.

So I think that this passage, rather than indicating that Jesus drank fermented wine, gives a good indication that all understood He did not drink fermented wine, end quote.

John the Baptist was not a social person. He was in the wilderness. He studied the Scriptures, some think among the Essenes. He was not out and about in coffee shops and eating and drinking with people. But Jesus was a social person in His ministry. He ate with people and drank with them. Now when you are visiting someone and it is between meals, the normal social thing is to drink something. In Israel the prized drink was grape juice. For those not familiar with the subject, wine in the Bible is the fruit of the vine.

We call it wine when it is fermented. In the Bible it was called wine if it was from the vine whether it was fermented or not. Nowadays you can check that out on the internet in a very short time.

So I expect that when Jesus visited with people, they got out their special social drink. They did not have coffee or tea or sodas back then. The prized drink was grape juice. So they call Him here a grape juice bibber, not a drunk.

Now look at the last words of Jesus in verse 19. He says:

*But wisdom is justified by her children.*

Now we ask first, what is *wisdom*. I was teaching on this in a class one time and one of the students said this: "It is knowledge to know that a tomato is a fruit; it is wisdom not to use it in a fruit salad." We know things when some fact is recorded our mind. For example, when we learn that  $2+2=4$  we have learned a fact and it becomes knowledge. Understanding is knowing how that works. Wisdom is when we put such facts to usefulness in life. It shows up in life.

Jesus said here that wisdom is justified by her children. As I see it, the children of wisdom are the actions that come from wisdom. So in order to call someone a wise man, it must show up in that man's actions.

Luke adds something to this passage not recorded in Matthew. He says in 7:29:

*29 And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.*

It is important to know that Jesus is in the Galilee area. It is sometimes called Galilee of the Gentiles (Matt. 4:15). It is these people the passage is talking about, not the religious leaders. And when they heard Him they justified God. What does that mean? These people said, "That is right, that is right, that is right." They agreed with God against their own sin. They declared God righteous and themselves wrong and in sin. Note

how they justified God. They justified God by repenting of their sins, confessing them and then being baptized. Wisdom was being justified by her children, the repentance and confession of sin and baptism justified God. You see, to say I have confessed my sins and repented and I am a Christian, and not to be baptized fails to justify God. Wisdom is justified of her children.

#### D. The Application

So what application may we make from this passage. It is my view that we are closing out an the OT era with John the Baptist. With Jesus Christ, the Messiah, we are beginning to see the dawning of a new day. When this time has fully come in, the Church will be in operation. We find the historical record of this beginning in Acts 2.

John had studied the Scriptures. He had been in the wilderness eating locusts and wild honey, and studying the Bible. He knew where they were. They were going to be closing out Daniel's 69th week in a very short while. Then would come seven years of trouble, and then the kingdom of God would be set up, and in this kingdom he fully expected to play a part. And now he is in prison. It did not make sense. May I ask you, do things sometimes not make sense to you? So John has sent a request of Jesus as to whether He was in fact the Messiah and he had received his answer. In just a very short while, unbeknown to him, he will be beheaded. His ministry was finished.

John had preached his heart out. He had been fearless in proclaiming sin for what it was. He had rebuked a very ungodly man, Herod, for marrying a divorced woman and he said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have her." This would cost him his life. Have you wondered how many times he wondered in prison if he had done the right thing?

Now let me show you an important truth to be gleaned from this. We do not see the big picture of life. If we live by faith and trust God and we do that which He gives us to do, we cannot see in the whole scheme of things



what we have contributed to the kingdom. No doubt John thought his life was a waste. He had ministered for a few months, and life was over. But in the kingdom of God he had accomplished a very huge task.

We might apply that to our lives. The key thing is that we do that work which God has given us to do. May I ask you, in the Lord's greater work of the Church, what are you doing? Have you grown listless? Do you think it all looks so hopeless anyway? That is what happened to John. He did not see the big picture. Faithfulness is what the Lord looks for in His servants.

But in the larger picture we might learn from this parable that the age of the OT closed out with God's chosen people being far away from Him. You could not interest them with anything. They wouldn't play wedding and they wouldn't play funeral. Nothing, from the saddest to the gladdest could stir their hearts. It is a picture of our age in many ways.

The interesting thing is that in Galilee of the Gentiles and among the outcasts of Israel the Lord found response. And from the time of this parable until Jesus' death was not too much longer. And after His death, burial, resurrection and ascension something very huge was going to happen. God would take the kingdom from Israel and give it to another nation, as the Lord's latter parables foretell it.

CONCL: So we have looked at the parables that give us the beginning of the transition from the OT to the time of the Church age. The very first parable, "You are the salt of the earth", spoken to the disciples and common people of Israel is a major change from what it has been like until that time. Then Jesus said, "You are the light of the world." This is true of all true believers today.

Then in a passage usually used to tell us we ought not to judge, the Lord taught the people how to make proper judgements. What keeps most people from making godly judgments is sin in their own lives. The Lord then pictured the world as being in a city, and this city had only two gates; one whereby one might escape the inevitable destruction of the city and another that made one think one was escaping. The narrow gate is the gate that leads

to glory and the broad gate, as I see it, pictures all those who use the Bible but they have been misled by false prophets at the gates. This is the picture of the whole world.

In closing the Sermon on the Mount the Lord gave the parable of the two houses. There are those who are building on a foundation of sand, and those building on a foundation of rock. If we profess to be believers, we are building on either one or the other.

Then the disciples of John came to Jesus to ask Him why His disciples do not fast. And Jesus gave the parable of the wedding. He likened Himself to a bridegroom and the disciples to the friends of the bridegroom and He said that as long as the bridegroom is with his friends it is not a time to fast but to enjoy life. But then He indicated that He would be leaving, and then His disciples would fast. Then He gave two parables to show what the time they were in was like. He indicated a new time was in the making and it was not fitting to try to fix the old with the new. Like a new cloth sewed to an old garment, it would make the tear worse. And like new wine poured into old bottles did not work because it would destroy both the new wine and the old wineskins.

He then gave the parables of the two debtors and the harvest. The harvest would ultimately go beyond Israel and into the whole world. Last, He described the age they were in at that time. Nothing could be done to satisfy the existing generation, and so a new work was already in the making. Well, it was not long later that the Church age began, the age Jesus saw coming in these parables.