

PART 11: THE AXIS OF UNDERSTANDING IN ONE SENTENCE, 3:31-35. #1. With one sentence the Lord changes the axes of understanding. "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother", 3:35. #2. Originally, we all partake of a primitive axis of understanding founded upon human experience of temporal reality. This is why Jesus' mother & brothers came looking for Him. The temporal axis of understanding is primitive but strong. The issue of blood relations is important & sacred. #3. "When His own people heard of this, they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, 'He has lost His senses'", 3:21. #4. Based upon the primitive axis of understanding (temporal) the Lord's blood relations could not grasp what Jesus was doing, how He was doing it, nor why He was doing it. The primitive axis of understanding had overtaken the world. It indicated that Jesus was insane. Why? Because the Lord transcended the primitive axis of thought, speech & behavior. The gospel was forced into that sea of meaning. Pharisees & scribes were representative of that axis. #5. Then the Lord presented the revealed axis of understanding. This supernatural axis is built on two things: (a) revelation/the word of God & (b) obedience to it. #6. God becomes the supreme reality, deposing the flesh. Revelation deposes the authority of human experience & rationalism. Human will is deposed as the principle motive for behavior. Obedience becomes the chief organizing force of life; the basis for thought, speech & behavior. It generates a contraction between all those who "do the will of God" ("My brothers, sister, mother"). #7. The gospel comes into time in order to redeem the mind/soul. No reduction of revealed truth to a mere doctrinal structure & practice is warranted. It is a fully different axis of understanding man in his setting. #8. It is not uncommon for many believers to attempt to limit the reach of scripture to the primitive axis. The Lord, however, calls us well beyond the primitive & its system of shared values. His kingdom shares a commitment to revealed absolutes! #9. Absolutes become the foundation for unity. Nothing sociological remains. Not socioeconomics, race, tradition, language, nationality nor even blood!

PART 12: THE PARABOLIC RECIPROCAL, 4:1-12. #1. The Lord presents to the reader a particular structure for the generation of a way of reasoning that we may call spiritual understanding. This structure is a generalization from the text; we refer to it as the parabolic reciprocal. #2. "And He was teaching them many things in parables, and was saying to them in His teachings, 'Listen to this!...' ", 4:2, 3. #3. It is important to acknowledge that the Lord was not implying that truth is to be found in nature. Which truth stands co-equal with the word of God. The truth is not in nature nor in the experience of nature; the truth is in the parable! The Lord did not suggest that the parable & the experience of nature are identical. #4. The parabolic reciprocal: This structure begins with the already revealed word of God, which meaning is then--->mapped on to nature & the experience of nature & from there everything in nature & the experience <---contracts back upon the word of God.

The word of God ---> nature (mapped) <---(contracts)

#5. Spiritual understanding depends upon the parabolic reciprocal. This revealed structure does not start with time, nature nor human experience. #6. Jesus gave the parable of the soils without explanation & stated, "...He who has ears to hear, let him hear", 4:9. The disciples must have been stunned; "As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables", 4:10. They did not grasp the "mystery" of spiritual understanding.

PART 13: THE PARABOLIC RECIPROCAL, 4:1-12. #1. The parabolic reciprocal poses a test of faith. "And He was saying to them, 'To you has been given the mystery of the kingdom of God, but those who are outside get everything in parables'", 4:11. The test is this: Does one have "ears to hear"? #2. "so that while seeing, they may see and not perceive, and while hearing, they may hear and not understand, otherwise they might return and be forgiven", 4:12. #3. The issue is spiritual understanding. How could one "see" & yet "not perceive" or "hear" & still "not understand"? The answer is implicit in the parabolic reciprocal: There was no appeal to revealed meaning & there was no contraction of the mind upon the word of God! #4. Such a fault line in perception & understanding is due to the insistent faith in nature, the experience of nature & of time, apart from the parabolic reciprocal. #5. There was no interest in nor respect for spiritual understanding. Parables were given to be understood; three of the soils were in deficit conditions to produce any crop, 4:4-7. Only the "good soil" (4:8) was fruitful. #6. Those trapped by nature & time were insistent on natural explanations. The parabolic reciprocal does not yield natural explanations but revealed understandings. The "scribes" (2:6) & the "Pharisees" (2:24) had learned no spiritual understanding from the Lord's teaching nor from His mighty deeds. #7. If the contemporary believer is not prepared to seek spiritual understanding & the revealed wisdom it gives, then, that is proof of the rejection of the parabolic reciprocal. Clinging to a preference for natural explanations over revealed meanings, leaves one reading the Bible, but far removed from "perceiving" & "understanding"!

PART 14: THE BASKET, 4:13-25. #1. "And He said to them, 'Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?'" 4:13. #2. The point of contention was spiritual understanding. The Lord explained the meaning & significance of the parable, 4:14-20. #3. The caution: "...A lamp is not brought to be put under a basket, is it, or under a bed? Is it not brought to be put on the lampstand?", 4:21. #4. What is the basket that obscures the "light" of the word of God? The "basket" represents an act of the will. The Lord was hardly cryptic in His use of parables. He exposed the discrepancy between natural explanations & revealed understandings. #5. It is the act of biblical faith to elevate revealed understanding above & beyond natural explanations. The first 3 soils in the parable exhibit the range of disinterest in the word of God; so they put the lamp under that basket. #6. Only the "good soil" put the lamp on "the lampstand". There are personal consequences attached to how one responds to revelation: "For nothing is hidden except to be revealed...it would come to light" (4:22);

"Take care what you listen to...your standard of measure...will be measured to you" (4:24); "For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him", 4:25. #7. Many Christians in the contemporary suffer from a condition of self-imposed darkness because the "basket" is the most comfortable treatment of scripture! Think of what is being "taken away"!

PART 15: PARABLES, THE FORK IN THE ROAD, 4:26-34. #1. "and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples", 4:34. #2. The Lord's use of parables is not an appeal to nature for understanding nor for truth. Proof of this is that Jesus "...was explaining everything privately to His disciples". There in, The Lord mapped His own intended meaning upon the temporal elements He had chosen. No ambiguity in the minds of the disciples could have remained. #3. Since the Savior was not trying to elicit truth from nature & in addition He taught the disciples plainly about the meaning of the parables, then, the parables constitute a fork in the road. #4. The parables as presented called for a decision, a personal choice on the part of every hearer. Is one to pursue spiritual meaning or shall one cling to human wisdom derived from human experience? #5. Delineation was made between the phenomenon of revealed understanding & natural explanations. One must choose between them; the fork in the road. #6. In the parables Jesus generates a revealed similitude (a likeness). "...The kingdom of God (is like) a man who casts seed upon the soil", 4:26. The growth of the "kingdom of God" grows by the power of God; like a dead seed that comes to life & produces a "crop", 4:27-29. Natural explanations are of no use. They fall short. #7. The Lord asked a question: "...How shall we picture the kingdom of God, or by what parable shall we present it?", 4:30. The Lord chose "a mustard seed" (4:31); and its unusual development from very small to very large. But the similitude is generated by the word of God & not by nature. #8. "With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it", 4:33. They did not recognize the fork in the road! The same landmark every reader must acknowledge when the Bible is opened.