



KINGDOM OF HEAVEN



Let's imagine:



Heaven

- where God
lives



Earth

- where we
live

Garden of Eden



In the beginning



**Heaven
on
Earth**

Separation



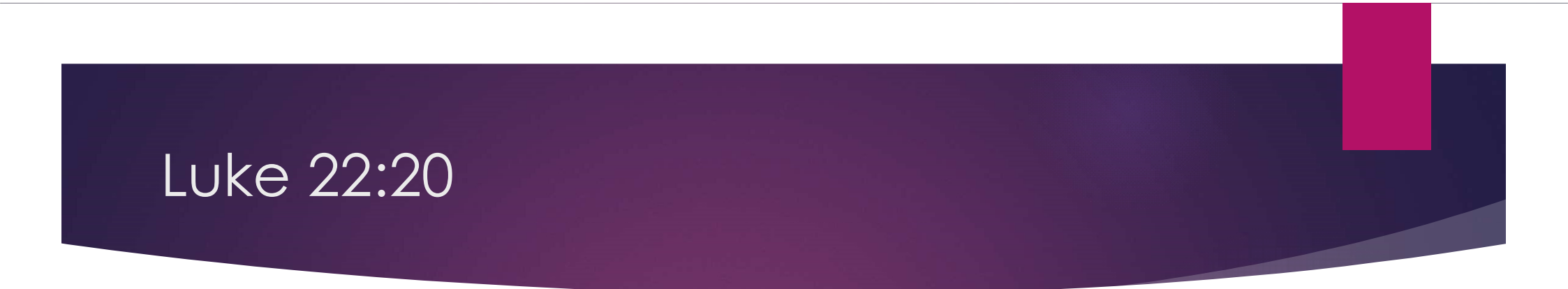
A
great
void





Genesis 3:15

And I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and hers, he will crush your head and you will strike his heel.



Luke 22:20

In the same way, after **the** supper he took **the** cup, saying,
“This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
which **is** poured out for you.

Parables of the Kingdom

Matthew 13 & Mark 4

1. Parable of the Sower
2. Parable of the Weeds
3. Parable of the Lamp
4. Parable of the Seed
5. Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast
6. Parable of Hidden Treasures and the Pearl
7. Parable of the Net

Matthew 13: 3-23

Matthew 13: 24-29; 36-43.

Mark 4: 22-25

Mark 4: 26-29

Matthew 13: 31-33

Matthew 13: 44-46

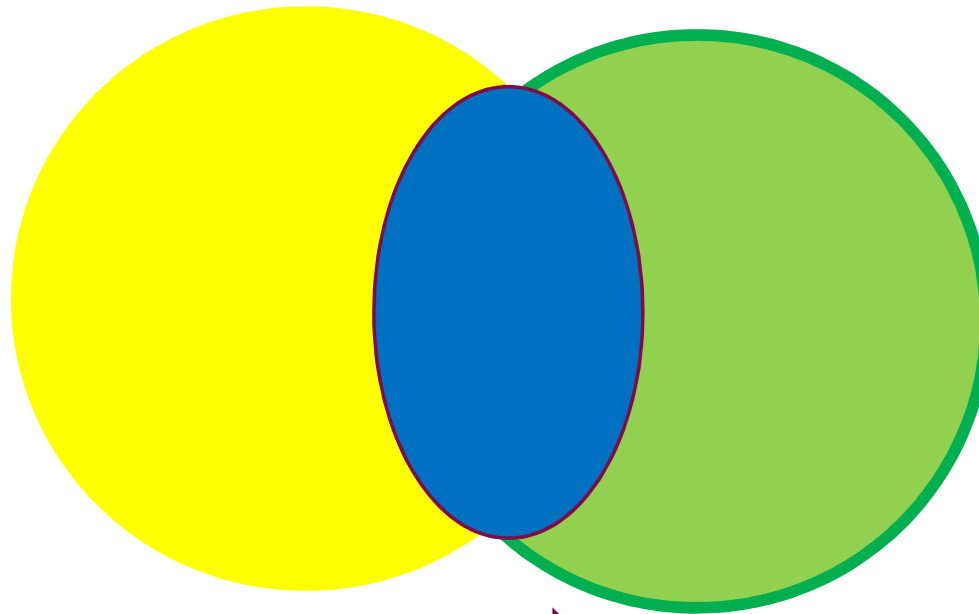
Matthew 13: 47-50





Kingdom of Heaven

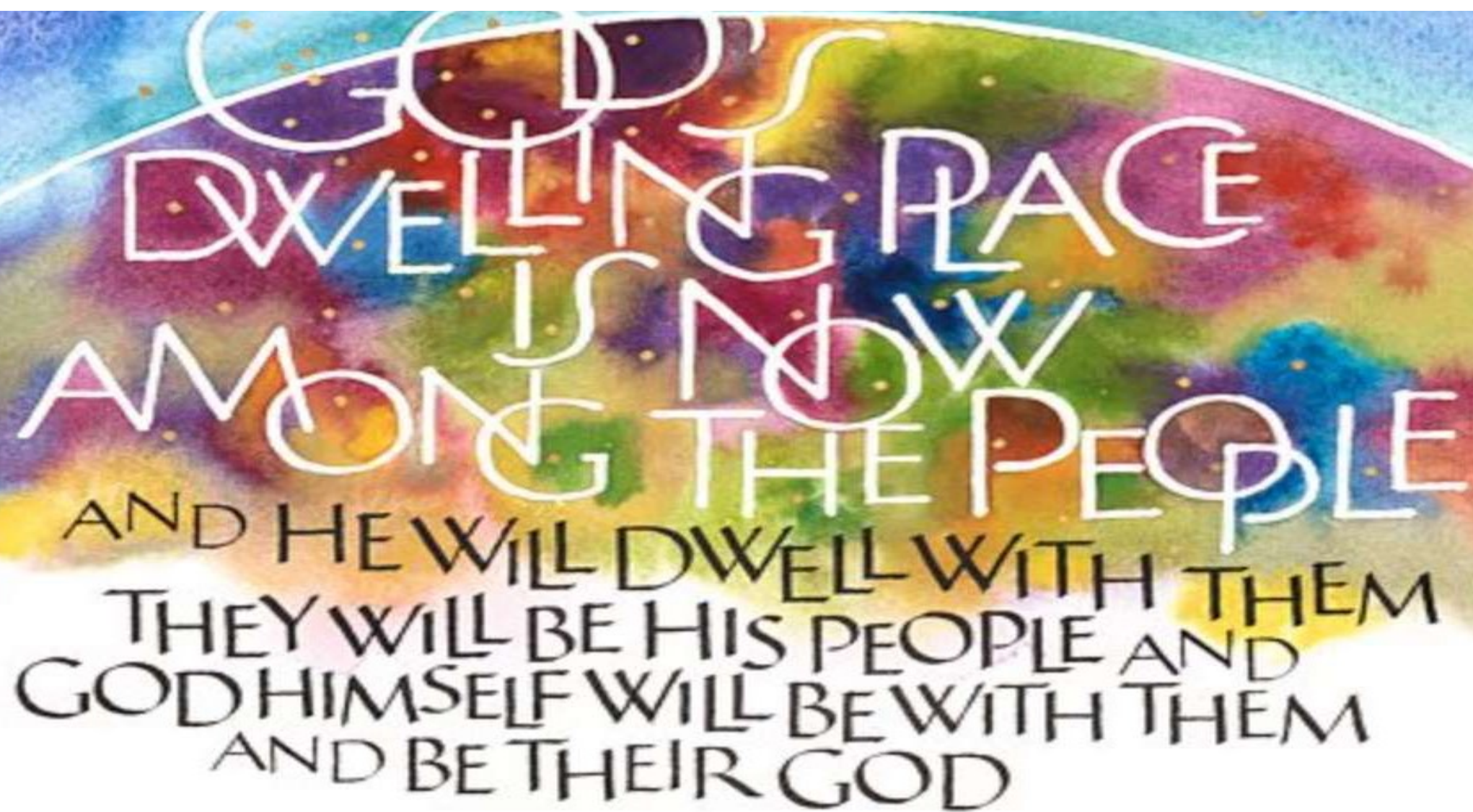
Heaven
- where
God lives



Earth
-
where
we live

Kingdom of Heaven on Earth





GOD'S
DWELLING GRACE
IS NOW
AMONG THE PEOPLE
AND HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM
THEY WILL BE HIS PEOPLE AND
GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM
AND BE THEIR GOD

from REVELATION 21:3



The Kingdom of Heaven

Good morning. My name's John Stevens and I was for a number of years a member of the Leadership Team here at GBC. More recently you may have seen me talking about the Refurbishment of the Worship Area – soon to take place.

Talk	Reference/Slide
<p>Today, I'd like to talk about the Kingdom of Heaven – or, as its sometimes referred to the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>Jesus spoke so much about this when he was teaching and he told a number of parables (stories with a hidden meaning) about the kingdom to help the people then, and us now, understand what the Kingdom is like. Indeed, when he first began preaching, he said the Kingdom of God is near></p>	<p>SLIDE 1</p> <p>Mark 1:15</p>
<p>I'd like now to set the scene for what I'm about to say by using these two rings. (If you're expecting me to gyrate with these hoops about my waist you're going to be disappointed. Those days were long ago.) But consider if you will, that this yellow ring is HEAVEN – it's the place where God lives. This green ring is Earth – where we live.</p>	<p>SLIDE 2</p>
<p>Now we go right back to the beginning of the Bible in Genesis when God walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. What a lovely garden it must have been! God looked at it and said "Behold it is very good."> It must have been like heaven on earth. Using our rings again they were perfectly aligned. Where Adam and Eve lived, is where God lived. They were in a close relationship talking often with one another – but all that was to change.</p>	<p>SLIDE 3 Gen 1:31</p>
<p>Adam and Eve disobeyed God by eating of the fruit of the tree of good and evil, the one that God said don't eat of!!! The Bible tells us that Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden and a Cherub with a flaming sword guarded the entrance and they could not return. These rings that we talked about earlier became separated with a great void between, and the relationship was broken,></p>	<p>SLIDE 4</p>
<p>We can rejoice today to know that God had a Rescue Plan to restore us to his side and there is just a hint of it in Genesis 3:15 His heel will crush the serpent's head.></p>	<p>SLIDE 5</p>
<p>In the books of the Bible that follow, God puts his plan in place and makes repeated promises or agreements with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and then lastly through own Son, Jesus. This last agreement or promise is explained</p>	<p>SLIDE 6</p>

throughout the New Testament of the Bible that we use today and we remember it specifically in the Communion Service where Jesus first showed us at the Last Supper with his disciples.

This is the New Covenant (Promise) in my blood. He took the place for our sin on the cross>

I want to return now to those parables about the Kingdom of God. There were seven in all:

1. **Parable of the Sower**
2. **Parable of the Weeds**
3. **Parable of the Lamp**
4. **Parable of the Seed**
5. **Parable of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast**
6. **Parable of Hidden Treasures and the Pearl**
7. **Parable of the Net**

All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He did not speak to them without a parable. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet: "I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world." Matthew 13:34-35

The Holy Spirit reminds us: He spoke in parables because they had rejected Him.

I only have time today to look at the first one - **The parable of the Sower and the Seed**. The parable revealed that people respond to the Word of God in a variety of ways, with most of them eventually rejecting it. Initially, some hear the good news about Jesus Christ with eagerness and joy, but later they decide to have nothing to do with Him. Those who hear, respond, and continue to believe in God are Christians. That is the message of the good soil. Jesus' parables about the **Kingdom of Heaven** were taught after He was rejected by the religious leaders of His day and after His pronouncement of judgment upon them and their generation.

All of the parables reveal how the kingdom of heaven has functioned and will continue to function. The parables also

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SLIDE 7

Luke 22:20

SLIDE 8

Matthew 13: 3-23

Matthew 13: 24-29; 36-43.

Mark 4: 22-25

Mark 4: 26-29

Matthew 13: 31-33

Matthew 13: 44-46

Matthew 13: 47-50

Matthew 1:1-23

reveal how the human race was responding and will continue to respond to God and His Word.

Some years ago, we had the joy of visiting the Holy Land and we went to the shores of Lake Galilee where Jesus told this parable.

I want you to imagine many people seated on the shore to listen to him speaking from a boat. There is a natural amphitheatre there. We sort of assume they were seated on nice mowed turf but of course it wasn't and they weren't. As we walked down to the lake I was struck by the variety of the plants along the way and I photographed some of them that were growing near the path. The same sorts of plants that Jesus was talking about when he spoke of the metaphorical sower. The audience had to watch they didn't sit on those thorns – just like the ones Jesus was talking about in his parable. Oh yes people of his day knew of the physical and metaphorical hinderances that would prevent them accepting his words and following his example.

But if the Kingdom is here why all the sickness and trouble in the world? The Bible doesn't shy away from the troubles of this life indeed it warns us to expect them.

The Kingdom is right now but not yet! How can that be?

The Kingdom currently exists in the world but not yet in its fullness. For that we wait and look forward to Christ's Second Coming.

And now to return to my visual example of the two rings. What has now happened in our story?

The rings have overlapped! Only a little at first. The Kingdom of Heaven came on that first Christmas when God in human form, Jesus came on this earth. But ever since the overlap has been increasing – little by little. Jesus said to his disciples "As the father has sent me so I send you – and that means us!! By the way, for Young people watching, these two overlapping rings form a Venn diagram.

There you are folks: New Maths and the Kingdom of Heaven - and you heard it here first at GBC!!!

But how did that overlap expand? Well there were the 12 disciples and then later we read of Jesus sending

SLIDE 9

SLIDE 10

SLIDE 11

John 20:21,22

out 70 disciples. Then there were other followers we can start to name them Mary and Martha and Lazarus and Simon of Cyrene and Joseph of Arimathea and Cephas and lots more.

After the resurrection Peter spoke and more than 3000 responded to his words

But the story of the diagram has an even happier ending. You see in the last days that Jesus will come again. **1 Thessalonians 4:16-17** tells us:

16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so, we will be with the Lord forever.

And furthermore, in **Revelation 21** we read:

Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth,"^[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. 2 I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. 3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 4 He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death^[b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

The two rings - the place where God lives and the place where we live, come together. Sound familiar? Just like in Eden with God's home the same as ours - though even more glorious.

It's wonderful when a plan comes together - which it most assuredly will.

Let us pray.

All the slides and notes will be put on the web site.

Final Song – God is working his purposes out

SLIDE 12

SLIDE 13

**SLIDE 14
Press go!!!**