

1. Opening Prayer

2. Intro: Heaven in the Bible

a. The Old Testament

*shamayim* in Hebrew. Plural, meaning “heights.”

Heaven is created just like the earth (Genesis 1:1, Jeremiah 4:23)

Three heavens: 1) heaven with birds (Gen 2:19), 2) heaven with stars (Deut. 17:3),  
3) highest heaven (Deut. 10:14)

God’s dwelling place (Deuteronomy 26:15), reigning the earth (Psalm 99:1)

God speaks from heaven (Deuteronomy 4:36)

The Son of Man will come from heaven (Daniel 7:13-14)

There will be new heavens just like new earth (Isaiah 65:17 and 66:22)

b. The New Testament

*ouranos* in Greek. Meaning “the vaulted expanse of the sky with all things visible in it”

**82 times in Matthew**, 18 in Mark, 8 in Luke, 18 in John, 26 in Acts, 21 in Paul’s letter,  
and 52 in Revelation.

The divine place (Matthew 3:17) with God’s will accomplished (Matthew 6:10)

Dwelling place of all believers with God (John 14:2-3)

There is “paradise” (Luke 23:43, 2 Corinthians 12:4, Revelation 2:7)

There is “inheritance” (1 Peter 1:4)

The Son of Man came from heaven (John 3:13) and ascended into heaven (Hebrews 4:14)

Questions.

- a. Can you find out any other bible verses/stories about heaven?
- b. Do you see any development of the understanding on heaven in the bible?

3. Sitz im Leben Jesu / kirche (Setting in life of Jesus / Church)

An attempt to interpret the text more than intuitively, considering the setting of stories & parables, so that the interpretation may not lose any important intention in a certain setting of the stories.

We are not the “natives” to the region, culture, and language 2,000 years ago.

4. Let us read Matthew 13

5. Discussion I: Verses 1-23

- a. What do you think the main point of the parable of the sower?
- b. Why do you think the sower sowed on the road, rocky and thorny grounds?
- c. Why do you think Jesus said, “let anyone with ears listen!” after telling the parable?
- d. What does the disciple’s question in verse 10 imply?
- e. In verse 11, who would be “you” and who would be “them”?
- f. Verse 12 misses the object of the verb, to have. What do you think it would be?
- g. Do you find out anything interesting in verses 18-23?

6. Discussion II: Verses 24-35

- a. What is the main point of each parable?
- b. Keeping the weeds till the harvest is very unusual. Why do you think the master decided not to take the weeds out till the harvest?
- c. Why do you think Jesus described the kingdom of heaven with the seeds?
- d. How do you understand verse 35, saying, “from the foundation of the world”?

7. Discussion III: Verses 36-53

- a. What do you think the devil wanted in verses 36-43?
- b. Does the verse 43 remind you of anything?
- c. What do you newly learn from the explanation in verses 36-43?
- d. Let us compare the parables of hidden treasure and fine pearls.
- e. How shall we understand verse 52?
- f. What would be the main point of each parable?

8. Closing Prayer