

THE PARABLES OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION TO THE SERIES

Lesson 1.

I. THE VOLUME OF MATERIAL

- A. More than 1/3 of the Master's recorded teachings are in parables.
- B. The exact number is difficult to name, depending on definition. Usually the number is listed at between **30 - 45**, or up to **60** if you include proverbs, riddles or simple comparisons.
- C. The Gospel of John does not mention "**parable**". Only a few appear in Mark. So, we must go to Matthew and Luke to find most of the parables, with Luke recording most of them.

II. WHAT IS A PARABLE?

- A. *Παραβολε* = *PARA-BALLO* = "A throwing alongside."
- B. Some have defined a parable as "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning". This is not broad enough. The gospels use the word loosely to mean simply a figurative saying, a comparison or analogy, many of which are in story form.

III. THE MASTER TEACHER USING THE MASTER METHOD

- A. Jesus was not the first or the only person to teach by parables. Old Testament prophets used them, one famous one being told to King David by the prophet Nathan.
- B. But Jesus used them most often, and to the greatest benefit. Often He would begin by asking, "What do you think?" He often would end by demanding a verdict!
- C. Another purpose of parables was to shield the truth for the present time. Luke 8:9-10.

IV. UNDERSTANDING THE PARABLES

- A. Distinguish between **parable** and **allegory**.
 - 1. How many points in a parable are in comparison?

2. Does every detail of the story have an inner meaning?
3. What would you say is the main difference between a **parable** and an **allegory**?

B. The central teaching of any parable the main lesson of the story must be grasped first! When this is done, other related truths of the parable can be understood in relation to the main theme. **Common sense is a prerequisite to understanding any**

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teaching of the Bible!

- C. To most accurately understand any parable you must *remember the circumstances of its origin.* The background of the parable and the context in which it is found should be known!
- D. To understand the parables, the introduction and application, if given, must be carefully attended to! These helps to interpretation are rarely lacking; sometimes they are supplied by the Lord Himself, as in **Matthew 22:14; 25:13**, and sometimes by the inspired narrators, as in **Luke 15:1-2, 18:1.**
- E. A **correct** interpretation **is not a forced interpretation!**
- F. The parables must not be made "*first sources*" of a doctrine! **Scriptural interpretation must always go from the literal to the figurative!**

CONCLUSION:

So we can see that the master teacher, Jesus, made clearer the truths which he had in hand, by the use of parables to illustrate and prove. They are written in the inspired record that we might obtain the same good from them as those who heard Jesus speak.

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