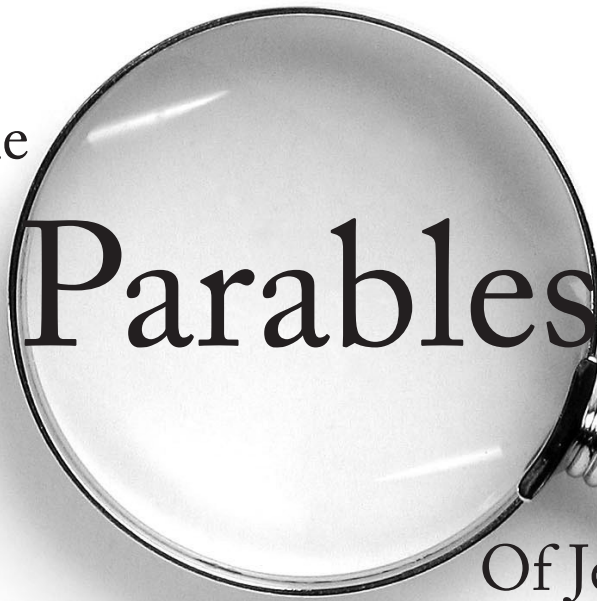


I N V E S T I G A T I N G

The



Parables

Of Jesus

I N V E S T I G A T I N G

*By Charles Willis*



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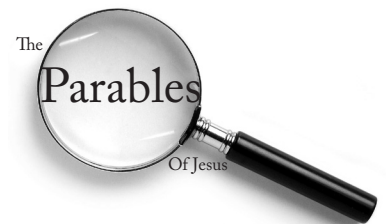
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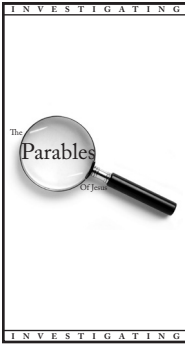


I N V E S T I G A T I N G

Written By: *Charles Willis*  
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## Introduction

# The Use Of Parables



Jesus spoke many things to the people in parables (Matt. 13:3). In fact, *“With many such parables He was speaking the word to them, so far as they were able to hear it; and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples”* (Mark 4:33-34). His use of parables was prophesied as a sign of the Messiah: *“I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things hidden since the foundation of the world”* (Ps. 78:2; Matt. 13:35).

*“I speak  
to them in  
parables;  
because while  
seeing they  
do not see,  
and while  
hearing they  
do not hear,  
nor do they  
understand”  
(Matt. 13:13)*

A parable is a type of figure of speech. It is not literal, even though the “story” may be a factual event. It is always intended to be figurative of spiritual meaning. A good definition of a parable is: “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.” In his marvelous work, *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, Trench discusses how a parable differs from a fable, a myth, a proverb and an allegory. Parables stand apart as a different genre and literary style. They are not unique to Jesus, several are even found in the Old Testament, but Jesus elevated their use to mastery.

Parables are often simple stories and as such they are very memorable. Many of the truths Jesus relays through a parable have more impact than had He simply stated the raw truth. His figurative teaching style made Him popular among people because they could relate to what He was saying, even if they did not grasp the heavenly meaning.

Jesus’ apostles questioned Him in Matthew 13 as to why he spoke to the people in parables. His answer: *“To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been granted...I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand... but blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear”* (Matthew 13:10-17). Those who had a spiritual leaning could grasp what Jesus was teaching. Those who did not concern themselves with righteousness did not understand the spiritual meanings of the parables. Jesus tells us part of His purpose was to reveal, through the parables, the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. It is our goal in this study to examine some of those mysteries.

This will require some interpretation of the parables. Men often go astray with their use of interpretation not understanding there are some logical rules which must be employed. We must first understand that in parables, like all figurative language, not everything in the story must point to a heavenly meaning. It is sometimes merely a setting or an embellishment to augment the flavor of the story. For example in the parable of the Good Samaritan we are wrong to try to place a heavenly meaning on the animal which carried the wounded man. That is pressing the imagery too far. However, some want to demand that too much of a parable is imagery. If we are not careful this can cause us to miss some of the heavenly meaning. Seldom can we find two individuals who agree on what should be set aside as imagery and what is the essential heavenly truth. During the course of our

*“To you it  
has been  
granted to  
know the  
mysteries  
of the  
kingdom  
of heaven”  
(Matt. 13:11)*

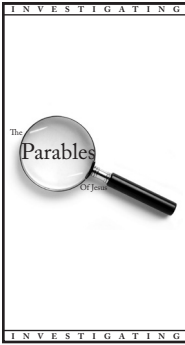
study, we may disagree on a few things because of the need of interpretation of the imagery.

We must pay attention to the context in which a parable is located. Often Jesus interprets the parable for us (Matt. 22:14; 25:13); sometimes the inspired writer interprets (Luke 15:1-2; 18:1); sometimes we are helped by words before the parable (Luke 18:9) and sometimes by words after the parable (Matthew 25:13). We must be very careful to adhere to this context and not make any conclusions that would deny or contradict the context.

We must also keep in mind that parables, as a figure of speech, should not be considered a first source of doctrine. They often serve as illustrations of doctrines that can be found in other Scriptures stated in a very literal way. It is always logically correct to move from the literal to the figurative (from the clear to the obscure), but it is illogical to take the figurative as doctrine. Because some reject this logical truth, many false interpretations have been rendered from the parables of Jesus.

Men who preach and teach the gospel today still make use of Jesus' parables, and devise their own parables. Some have gone so far into "story-telling" that little attention is given to Scripture, which is a wrong concept. Yet a good illustration does much to convey the point. Charles Spurgeon once said, "a sermon without illustrations is like a room without windows." The illustration is a veritable "window" through which we come to see the truth. Without the heavenly truth, the storytelling is simply entertainment. Most people retain information better when transmitted orally than from written sources alone. God knew this, which is why He was "*well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe*" (1 Cor. 1:21).

In my efforts to set forth a pattern of study for the parables, I found groupings of parables that seemed logical and profitable, and others that made no sense to me. There is an abundance of material written by men about the parables of Jesus, as they are a favorite portion of Scripture for study and preaching. One good grouping lists the parables as portraits of men: debtors, sons, guests, travelers, workers, servants, rich men, builders, etc. Another good grouping is through a chronological view of Jesus' ministry. There is not a right or wrong way to group the parables. For our study I have used four groupings: (1) The Kingdom of Heaven, (2) The Character of the King, (3) The Character of the King's Subjects, and (4) The Judgment.



# About The Kingdom Of Heaven

Lesson  
#1



The Sower is a parable that gives the essence of the gospel in a very simple and memorable way. Some call this the “father of parables.” It is instructive of all parables in that Jesus gives the explanation of the heavenly meanings. Yet there remains much depth to this parable worthy of investigation. Much is revealed about the kingdom of heaven.

1. What does Jesus say and teach in this parable about hearing the word of God? (Notice Mark’s account begins with “Listen to this!”) What is the responsibility of hearers?

**Scripture**  
**References**  
Matt. 13:3-23  
Mk. 4:2-20  
Lk 8:4-15

2. Jesus plainly teaches the “word of the Kingdom” is the seed (Matt. 13:19). Compare this with 1 Peter 1:23 and Genesis 1:11-12. What truth becomes evident from this comparison?

This parable is primarily about the hearers, but it does reveal some about the sower. Surely he intended us to understand He was the sower, as is any who share the gospel.

3. To whom should the sower sow?

Primarily, this parable is about the soils and the kind of heart that makes up citizens of the heavenly kingdom. Jesus refers to them as the “hearers” (Matt. 13:13). For each type of heart, relay what influences effect people (both good and bad) that would lead them to be described in this way. Also relay some preventative measures to help us not become the heart that is described.

4. The Hard Heart
  - A. Influences
  - B. Preventative Measures

5. The Shallow Heart
  - A. Influences
  
  - B. Preventative Measures
  
6. The Crowded Heart
  - A. Influences
  
  - B. Preventative Measures
  
7. The Honest and Good Heart
  - A. Influences
  
  - B. Preventative Measures
  
8. How does the parable of the sower support passages that teach the truth of the Kingdom of heaven and supports other passages that refute the tenants of Calvinism?

*Truth About The Kingdom Of Heaven*

*Tenants of Calvinism*

- A. Total Hereditary Depravity
- B. Unconditional Election
- C. Limited Atonement
- D. Irresistible Grace
- E. Preservation of the Saints

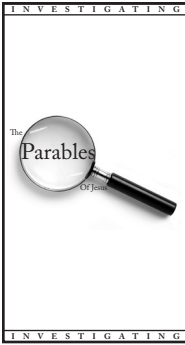


### ***Think About This***

What does this parable reveal to sowers about “failing to convert” some?

Please explain Luke 8:18 in the context of the sower: “so take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he things he has shall be taken away from him.”





# About The Kingdom Of Heaven

Lesson  
#2

## Mustard Seed Leaven



While Matthew 13:31-33 records some of the shortest of Jesus' parables, their imagery is strong and instructive. There is a depth to the simplicity of Jesus' teaching which men have not been able to duplicate. The Divine wisdom with which He taught is visible in the parables. All of these parables are intended to reveal information about the Kingdom of Heaven.

The mustard seed is one of the smallest of all seeds, yet the mustard plant in Palestine grew to be twelve feet tall and is called a tree in which the birds would nest. We are wrong to press the imagery to determine what is represented by the birds, their nests, or even the branches of the tree. This parable is about the growth of the seed.

The Kingdom of Heaven started with such humble beginnings in a manger. Jesus' followers during His ministry only numbered in the dozens. From such a small beginning grew the universal church. There are great lessons in this parable about the gospel.

**Scripture  
References**  
Matthew 13:31-32  
Mark 4:30-32

1. Who would the sower figuratively represent?
2. Describe the "power" and "potential" of the gospel seed.
3. How does this prophetic parable parallel the prophecy of Daniel 2:35, 44-45?



Following the same theme as the parable of "The Sower" and "The Mustard Seed" is the short parable in Mark 4 of "The Growing Seed". The Kingdom of Heaven is not something that sprang up in a moment. God planned it from the beginning of the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4) and that plan came to fruition "in the fullness of time" (Ephesians 1:10) in Christ Jesus. The work of the Holy Spirit brought the complete revelation of God's will to light through inspired men even up to the first century (John 14:26). Like the growth of a plant from seed to maturity, the growth of the Kingdom of God is gradual.

Matthew 13:33  
Mark 4:26-29

4. Describe how an individual Christian's growth is gradual.

5. As the seed moves through stages of growth described as “first blade, then the head, then the mature grain”, what does Scripture reveal about stages of Christian growth?

In the parable, the farmer recognized the seed grew, but “how, he himself does not know” (Mk 4:27). It was not anything man does that causes growth. We can effect conditions to make growth possible, but God causes the growth of the seed providing rain and sunshine. The farmer plants the seed and goes to bed at night leaving the rest up to God. In the spiritual kingdom this imagery is also true. As a sower of the seed all we can do is plant and insure conditions are ripe for growth, but we cannot cause growth. “I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth” (1 Cor. 3:6). God has great interest in His spiritual Kingdom and will take great care in overseeing the growth of the planted seed.

Just as the seed is planted, the parable of the leaven teaches the word must be “hid” within the lump of dough.

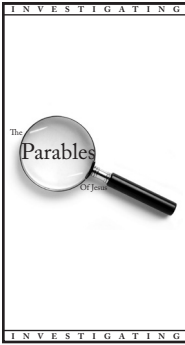
6. What Scriptural evidence is found to indicate the gospel must be planted in the heart and work from the inside to the outside?
7. Like a lump of dough that is changed by leaven, how does the gospel change a man?



### ***Think About This***

Discuss how the leaven of the gospel works contagiously “until it was all leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

What do these parables reveal about our role in the Kingdom?



# About The Kingdom Of Heaven

Lesson  
#3

## Hidden Treasure Pearl of Great Price



Men have written much about these two small parables, and much of it presses the imagery to the point of absurdity. Jesus is likening these to the kingdom of heaven. They are a revelation about the Kingdom which is now in existence on earth and is called the church. Encompassed in this view of the church is all that makes up man's salvation and the eternal reward.



*Matthew 13:44*

1. What does Scripture reveal about the value of the kingdom and the salvation which comes from God? (In these parables referred to as a "treasure" and a "great value".)

2. How does a person come to recognize the value of the Kingdom of heaven?



*Matthew 13:45-46*

3. Why does the value of the kingdom seem to change over time (for some people)? When do some feel the kingdom is of greater value?

4. Discuss what Scripture reveals as the price of possessing the treasure which is the Kingdom of heaven.

5. In both parables what is conveyed about the man's attitude toward the purchase? Compare with Philippians 3:7-8 and Matthew 6:33.

*“...he went  
and sold  
all that he  
had and  
bought it”  
(Matt. 13:26)*

6. Perhaps the greatest difference in the two parables is that one man happened upon the treasure and the other was seeking the valuable pearl. What spiritual lessons can we learn from these differences?



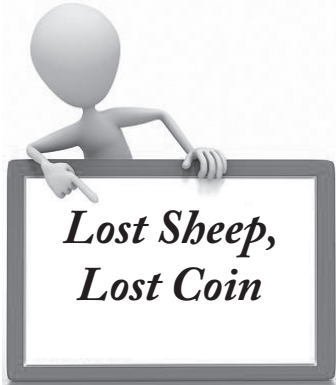
### ***Think About This***

If the Kingdom of Heaven is a treasure in our heart, what will be our attitude about service in the Kingdom?

If the Kingdom of Heaven is a treasure in our heart, what will be our attitude about temptation and sin?

# About The Character Of The King

Lesson #4



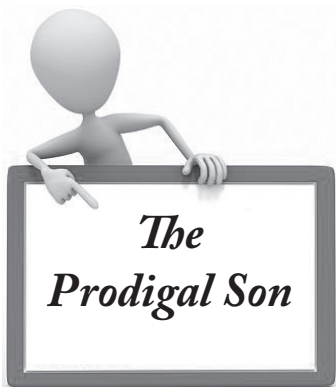
***Lost Sheep,  
Lost Coin***

***Luke 15:1-10***

Luke chapter 15 is often divided into three parables, and most frequently the parable of the Prodigal is studied separate from the rest of the chapter. In fact, many men have written books about the Prodigal. We must be careful to consider what Jesus is revealing in Luke 15. All three parables collectively are described as a parable (15:3).

This three-sided parable is Jesus' answer to the Pharisees and scribes who charged "this man receives sinners and eats with them" (15:2). Plainly in this extended parable, Jesus answers their charge with a resounding "yes." "What we have here are not so much as three parables, but one parable with three aspects. By means of this triune parable, Jesus set forth the supreme and sublime fact that as the Son of Man He came into the world to seek and save the lost" (Lockyer, *All the Parables of the Bible*, p.281). Perhaps more than any other, this chapter reveals much about the character of the King.

1. What was the importance of what had been lost?
  - A. Sheep (15:1-7)
  - B. Coin (15:8-10)
  - C. Son (15:11-32)



***The  
Prodigal Son***

***Luke 15:11-32***

2. How did each come to be lost?
  - A. Sheep (15:1-7)
  - B. Coin (15:8-10)
  - C. Son (15:11-32)

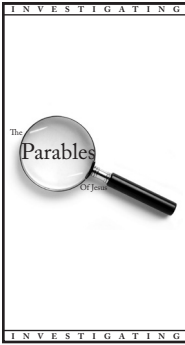
3. Describe God's attitude toward the lost as expressed in each part of this parable.
  - A. Sheep (15:1-7)
  - B. Coin (15:8-10)
  - C. Son (15:11-32)
4. What did the Prodigal desire when he left home, and what did he lose?
5. What steps are seen in how the Prodigal came to return to the Father?
6. What is the point in Jesus' relaying the attitude of the older son?
7. How does this three-part parable answer the charge of the Pharisees and scribes (15:32)?



### *Think About This*

If the state of the one who is lost can be changed (as expressed in this parable), how does this fact reconcile with what is revealed in 2 Peter 2:20-22 and Hebrews 6:4-6?

What do we learn should be our attitude from observing God's attitude toward the lost?



# About The Character Of The King

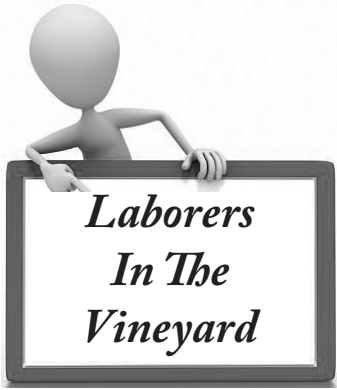
Lesson  
#5



In the parable of “The Wicked Vine Growers”, Jesus presents a story that most in Palestine were familiar with. A man prepared and furnished a field with all that it needed to be successful, and then leased it out to farmers. His tenants were unwilling to pay their rent and they wronged his representatives that were sent, even killing his son.

*Matthew 21:33-45*  
*Mark 12:1-12*  
*Luke 20:9-19*

1. Please identify who is represented by:
  - A. The householder who planted the vineyard:
  - B. The vineyard:
  - C. The husbandmen who were placed over the vineyard:
  - D. The servants sent again and again:
  - E. The son who was cast out and killed:
  
2. Describe how the parable represents God’s patience with men.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How is Jesus presented in the Parable as being different from the other messengers? Try to provide another passage where Jesus makes a similar distinction.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. The vine growers were given everything they needed, but they still failed because of their sorry attitude. Relate how Christians must learn from this to have a proper attitude. Try to convey how we also have been given everything that was needed.



*Matthew 20:1-16*

The parable of “The Laborers In The Vineyard” is in a similar setting. Much of Palestine is full of vineyards and many would have been very familiar with these verbal portraits. The focus of this parable is also upon the grace of God.

5. Please identify who is represented by:
  - A. The landowner:
  - B. The first laborers:
  - C. The later (or last) laborers:
  
6. What does this parable reveal about God’s character? (see especially 20:13-15)
  
  
  
7. What did the laborers agree to work for?
  - A. The first laborers:
  - B. All the rest of the laborers:
  - C. Discuss how the attitude toward work is a minor theme of the parable and how it relates to our efforts in the vineyard of the Lord.

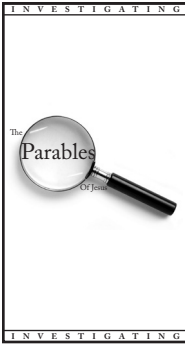


### *Think About This*

What judgment did the chief priests and elders (21:23) pass upon themselves (21:41)?  
 What is revealed about God’s patience with sinful men (21:42-44)?

What is the point made with “the last shall be first, and the first last” (20:16)? (See the context including Matthew 19:16-30)





# About The Character Of The King's Subjects

Lesson  
#6



**Luke 10:25-37**

Luke is the only writer to include this parable, yet it remains one of the most remembered of all of Jesus' teachings. This has been called by some "the most practical of all parables" for it gets to the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. There is no room here for religion to be seen of men, nor for platitudes or definitions. Jesus teaches in one scene what it means to live as a child of God.

A lawyer poses a question to Jesus. This was not unusual, nor was the question for it is asked in Matthew 19:16. The lawyer was one studied in the Law of Moses who should be able to answer questions about the Law. This is why Jesus turned the question back to him and had him recite what is written in the Law. Jesus seemingly ends the discussion with a simple point "do this and you will live" (perhaps a quotation of Leviticus 18:5).

1. Why did the lawyer ask an additional question (10:29)?

Jesus answers his question with the great parable which takes place on the road going down from Jerusalem to Jericho (10:30). This road is seventeen miles long and descends almost 3,400 feet. It is a winding, twisting road with many switchbacks. It has always been a dangerous road for travelers. Jerome wrote of this road in the late fourth century as being "infested with bandits" and that a portion of the road was known as "the red way" or "the bloody way" because so much blood had been shed there by robbers. So the parable presents a situation the hearers understood was a very real possibility. A man "fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead" (10:30).

2. Tell what you know about each of the travelers in the parable:

A. A Priest (10:31)

B. A Levite (10:32)

C. A Samaritan (10:33)

3. Why was the passing by on the other side a bit surprising coming from the Priest and Levite?

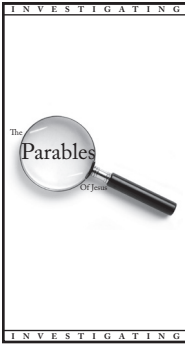
4. List the details of what the Samaritan did for the wounded man.
  
5. While some who claim to follow Christ choose to live in a monastery (separated from the world), some in the church want to relate exclusively with brethren. How does the Samaritan in the parable demonstrate we are to live in the world? (see also 1 Corinthians 5:9-11)
  
6. What is Jesus' great conclusion to this parable?



### ***Think About This***

How does this parable instruct us about the compassion we should have (see also Matt. 5:7; Col. 3:12; Luke 6:36)?

Discuss how the characters in the parable represent different mindsets of men in how we relate to one another. Include in your considerations Luke 6:31.

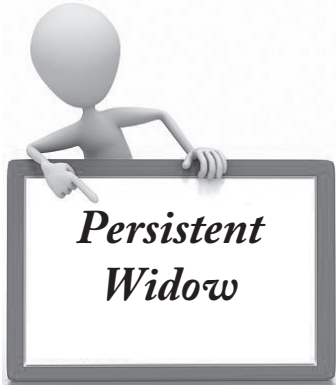


# *About The Character Of The King's Subjects*



## The Persistent Widow The Friend At Midnight The Tower, The King

Lesson  
#7



***Luke 18:1-8***

1. What point is Jesus intending to teach with the parable of “The Widow” (Luke 18:1)?

2. What immediately proceeds the parable of “The Friend At Midnight”?

We learn from these parables some important truths about prayer. Jesus had been asked “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1), and we sometimes want to limit that to the “Lord’s prayer” but Jesus did not. Jesus teaches in both of these parables that persistence is a good thing in prayer. We ought always to pray and not lose heart.

3. Why did the widow go to the judge again and again? Why did the man wake his friend at midnight?

4. Read the continuing context in Luke 11:9-13. What point is Jesus emphasizing with the comparison to the father and son and how does this relate the parable of “The Friend At Midnight”?



***Luke 11:5-13***

5. Is Jesus teaching we will always get what we request? (compare with 2 Sam. 12:15-24; 2 Cor. 12:7-9; James 1:6-7; Matt. 26:39)

6. How do we not lose heart (Luke 18:1)?



*Luke 14:28-33*

7. What is the context in which the parables of “The Tower” and “The King” are found (Luke 14:26-27)? What does Jesus mean by “hate”?

Certainly, ‘counting the cost’ is the theme of these parables. The building of a tower was generally done in a vineyard as a means of protection and a high vantage point to watch for thieves during the time of the harvest. If a man ran out of funds before the tower was completed, everyone would see his folly, just as we see the folly of an unfinished house that someone started to build. Similarly, a King must count the cost of the battle before he enters it. He will be a more prudent king to surrender before the battle begins than to enter the battle and be defeated at great cost of life.

8. What is the point of application from these two parables (Luke 14:33)?

9. What points about discipleship must be counted?

A. Matthew 16:24 (also Gal. 2:20; Col. 3:5, 8-9)

B. John 8:31-32 (also John 14:15)

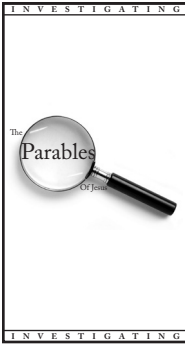
C. John 15:18



### *Think About This*

What do the parables of the widow and the friend at midnight teach us about being specific in our prayers to God?

What character traits of disciples are revealed in these parables?

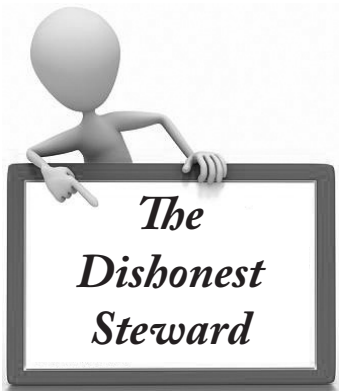


# *About The Character Of The King's Subjects*



## The Dishonest Steward

Lesson #8



This parable stands apart from all the rest of Jesus' teachings in that the characters are all evil. The main character, a steward, was a fraud and a thief. The debtors willingly agreed to write a false amount for the debt they owed. The master commended the dishonest steward for his fraud and theivery. Because of the lack of a "good" central figure, many struggle to understand the point of the parable.

1. When the steward (or manager) was about to lose his position, what effect did this have on him? How much repentance is seen?

*Luke 16:1-13*

2. Why did he have the debtors falsify the amounts they owed (16:3-7)?

3. What is revealed about the attitude of the master? What would we expect his behavior and attitude to be toward this steward?

Verse eight becomes key to our understanding of the parable. Jesus paints this picture of evil to present a comparison between the "sons of this age" and the "sons of light".

4. What point is Jesus making in the comparison (16:8-9)?

5. What is the "wealth of unrighteousness" (NAS) or "mammon of unrighteousness" (KJ)? (16:9)

Jesus uses this parable to teach a few truths that are worth our attention as they bear light on what our attitude should be as kingdom subjects. He speaks of money and our attitude toward it (16:9). He indicates it is a temporary thing that will not be in the eternal dwellings. He contrasts “unrighteous wealth” with the “true riches” (16:11). Surely the heavenly home and spending an eternity with God are the “true riches.” Many give up the true riches to revel in the unrighteous wealth. As Christians we must live in this world and manage wealth.

6. What point is made in 16:11 through the contrast of unrighteous wealth and true riches?

7. Jesus indicates we are all stewards in 16:12 in that we use “that which is another’s.” What should be our attitude as the steward? (16:12-14)

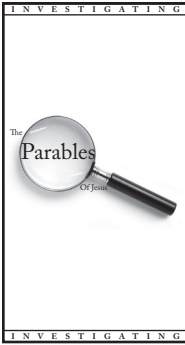
8. Provide the importance of one last contrast seen in this parable between the “sons of light” (16:9) and the Pharisees (16:13). What should be our attitude toward money?



### *Think About This*

Of what are we stewards? (try to provide other passages)

Describe the dangers and benefits of wealth for a Christian.



# *About The Character Of The King's Subjects*



## Pharisee and Publican Two Builders Two Sons

Lesson  
#9



To help us understand the character of those approved of God, Jesus told parables which contrasted two individuals. Often these two individuals are extreme contrasts. Yet, as in all parables, there is a degree of truth to what Jesus says that makes the stories easily understandable.

1. For this first Parable, please tell what is generally known about the Pharisees and the Publicans (or tax collectors). What was the general attitude of the people about these two groups?

***Luke 18:9-14***

2. Did the Pharisee offer a prayer?

3. What made the Publican's prayer acceptable?

4. What do these additional passages teach Christians about the character of the King's subjects?

A. James 4:6, 10

B. 1Peter 5:5-6

C. Matthew 23:11-12

D. Luke 14:7-11



*Matthew 7:21-29*

The context for the parable of “The Two Builders” makes clear what point Jesus is making. Matthew 7:21 says the one who will enter the kingdom of heaven is “he who does the will of My father.” It was not enough to call Jesus Lord, or do religious things in his name when in fact they were acts of “lawlessness.” In fact, this parable is arguably the strongest message about obedience which Jesus stated. In Luke’s account, the parable begins with “why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you.”

5. What two types of people are likened to the man who built on the sand and the one who built on the rock?

6. Why do we fail to do what we have heard?

7. When will a man’s acting upon what he has heard become obvious (in the parable)? (see also James 1:3-4,12)



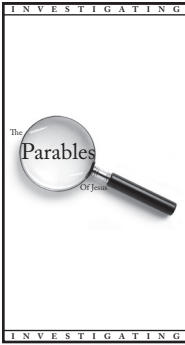
*Matthew 21:28-32*

The contrast of “The Two Sons” is obvious: one who said he would go and would who said he would not. They appear to be the righteous and the rebellious, however, in reality they are the rebellious and the righteous as they both appear to have a change of heart. Just as the father called upon his sons to labor in the vineyard, so our heavenly Father calls upon each of us to do work in His vineyard.

8. Who was Jesus aiming at with this parable (21:31-32)?

9. This parable may be the most condemning for people in the Lord’s Church because it speaks to a truth that is all too apparent. What spiritual truth about the character of the King’s subjects must we learn?





# About The Character Of The King's Subjects

Lesson #10

## Marriage of King's Son, Wedding Garments, and The Great Supper



“Two favorite images under which the prophets set forth the blessings of the new covenant – that of a festival (Is. 25:6; 65:13), and that of a marriage (Is. 61:10; 62:5; Hos. 2:19), are united in the marriage festival here” (*Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, Trench, p.77). There are many characters in the parable of the “Marriage Of The King’s Son” who represent various groups of people. The King must represent God the Father, and the King’s son, must represent Jesus.

1. Who is represented by the slaves (subjects) who carried the invitations (22:3)?
2. Who is represented by those that are invited?
3. While there is much revealed about the King’s subjects in this parable, what can be learned about God?
4. How are the subjects of the King treated (22:5-6)? How does this compare with how Christians will be treated (provide a few passages)?

### Matthew 22:1-14

It cannot be missed that Jesus is condemning the Jewish society that would reject Him. The religious leaders would reject Him and so God would turn to others in that nation to invite, “both the evil and good.” Their rejection of God’s invitation angered God who effectively destroyed the nation in A.D. 70 with the sword of the Roman army. There may even be a hint of the call of the Gentiles in that the slaves were to go to the main highways and invite as many as they found (22:9). In this way the wedding feast was fully attended.

When the King comes to the banquet he finds one not dressed in marriage garments. Understand that it would have been the custom of a royal figure to provide gifts to the guests of fine garments with the understanding they would wear them to add to the festive atmosphere. That one was undressed does not indicate he was just a poor man, for others at this banquet would have been in the same situation. The others appear to have been dressed appropriately, but this man was not – and he had no explanation to offer the King. Truly for him there was no excuse.

5. What application are we to make from 22:13-14?
6. What character of the King’s subjects are we to learn to adopt from this parable?



*Luke 14:15-24*

The parable of “The Great Supper” is very similar to that of “The Marriage of the King’s Son”, so much so that some want to say they are parallel accounts or variations of the same parable. They are not the same since they teach different principles, but are drawn from a similar setting. Whereas “The Marriage of the King’s Son” reveals much about the King’s subjects, this parable reveals much about the coming judgment.

The Jews believed that the setting up of the kingdom of God would be ushered in with a great festival. This is why one of the guests responds to Jesus statement of being repaid at the resurrection of the righteous with “Blessed is everyone who will eat bread in the kingdom of God” (14:15). It was a phrase of blessing to those who would be part of that resurrection of the righteous. It is likely the parable was spoken to this man who was thinking of himself as one who would be a part of the resurrection of the righteous.

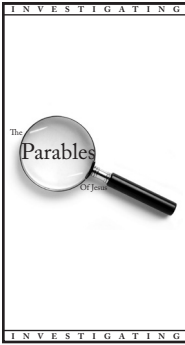
7. In the previous parable, those invited rejected the offer by killing the slaves that had been sent. In Luke 14, what excuses are offered for some who would not attend?
  
8. What is meant by “compel them to come” (14:23)? Why did they need to be compelled?



### *Think About This*

Give two excuses which men offer for rejecting God’s invitation.

If we understand the one sending invitations represents the Father, please explain the meaning of 14:24. What does this reveal about God’s character?



## *About The Judgment*

Lesson  
#11

### The Rich Fool Rich Man And Lazarus

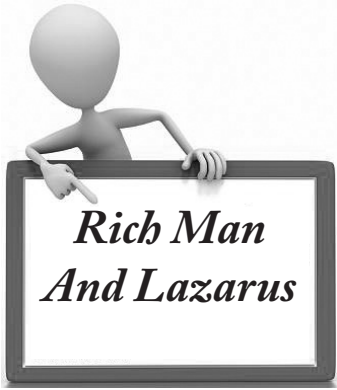


*Luke 12:13-21*

“Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Luke 12:33-34).

The setting for this teaching was of a man asking Jesus “bid my brother divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus tells him to beware all covetousness. From this exchange it seems clear this was a younger brother wanting the older brother to share his lawful “double portion” which was inherited from the father. The Law was very clear about this and Jesus was not drawn into this family squabble. He does indicate this brother’s motives were wrong.

1. How does the parable demonstrate the truth of Jesus’ statements, “a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions”?
2. How does our society demonstrate many have covetousness in their heart?
3. How can covetousness keep us from obeying God?
4. How did the rich man behave like a fool?
5. How are we to be “rich toward God”?



In the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus the rich man is not named. Lazarus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Eleazar which means “God is my help.” Surely Jesus chose this name to show God helps those who call on Him. He gives us a glimpse of the spiritual realm.

6. Where did the rich man and Lazarus find themselves after they died?
7. What truths are seen in this text about a person’s soul and our eternal destiny?

*Luke 16:19-31*

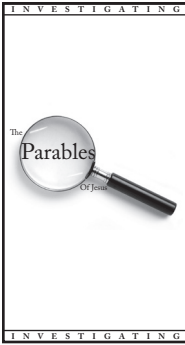
8. After death, what could be done by any one soul to change themselves or any other sinful soul?
9. What was the rich man’s attitude toward God’s Law (16:29-31)?
10. What is God’s attitude about the judgment in light of the Law?



### *Think About This*

When should we be concerned about speaking to family members about spiritual things?

How do we learn to live in this life based on the rich man’s mistakes?



## *About The Judgment*

The Tares  
The Dragnet  
The Barren Fig Tree

Lesson  
#12



*Matthew 13:24-30*  
*Matthew 13:47-50*

The parable of “The Tares” and “The Dragnet” teach very similar concepts and should be studied together. Both parables strongly point to the judgment, when God would separate the good from the evil. While men (in this life) may not be able to tell them apart, it will be obvious to God. “The Tares” is another example of a parable with Jesus’ explanation.

1. What point does Jesus strongly make about the end of the age?
2. Do these two parables point to eternal punishment or just an annihilation of the wicked?
3. What is revealed about the destiny of the faithful?

“Fish are either good or bad. What is not wheat is weeds. Jesus teaches in these two parables that men are either good or bad and that there is no inbetween.”  
(*Lessons from the Parables*, Lightfoot, p.48)

The context in which “The Barren Fig Tree” is given relates to a misconception held by many, even today. The thought remains that if a dreadful calamity strikes a person then it **MUST** be because of some wickedness they had done. It is true that many Old Testament examples exist of God allowing calamity as a judgment upon individuals and nations, but that is not **ALWAYS** the reason. Some Galileans were killed by Herod, but that did not mean they **MUST** have done some great wickedness. Jesus relates it to the 18 killed when a tower fell on them. “Do you think they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem?” We do not always know why calamity comes. Sometimes the natural laws of the creation bring calamity (tornados, earthquakes, hurricanes, landslides, etc.).

4. What point does Jesus say the people should instead understand (Luke 13:3)?
5. How does the prable prove Jesus’ point?



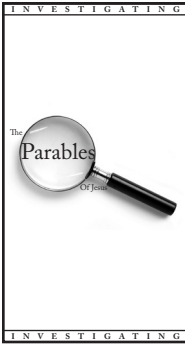
*Luke 13:1-9*

6. How is repentance connected to bearing fruit in the parable of “The Barren Fig Tree”?
7. What was the purpose of the barren tree? What is the purpose of the believer who does not bear fruit?
8. How do believers “bear fruit”? (Compare with Matthew 5:13)
9. What point about God’s judgment is taught in this parable? (Compare with Matthew 7:19)



### *Think About This*

What is revealed about God’s patience in the parable of “The Barren Fig Tree”?



# About The Judgment

Lesson  
#13



*Matthew 25:1-13*

When coupled with the parables of “The Talents” (Matthew 25:14-30), it becomes clear Jesus is teaching about being prepared. In Matthew 24 He warned of the coming destruction of Jerusalem and how they needed to be ready. Application is seen even at the end of chapter 24 to the second coming of Christ. Everyone agrees with that application in regard to the parable of the ten virgins. The Bridegroom clearly represents Christ.

1. Please describe the setting of the virgins waiting for the bridegroom and the anticipation of the marriage feast.
2. What made five virgins foolish?
3. What made five virgins wise?
4. Explain how we are to apply Jesus’ statement “watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”
5. What does the parable teach about the judgment of God?
6. What type of faith is represented by the “foolish virgins”?
7. How are we to “trim our lamps” (v.6)?

## *Think About This*

In refusing to share oil, five are considered wise. What is this teaching about our personal preparation for the judgment?

