

INTRODUCTION.

A. Scripture text: **Matthew 13:13-16.**

“Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, ‘YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.’ But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.”

B. Jesus taught in narrative, story, and parable.

C. Tonight’s lesson is an introduction to the parables.

I. WHAT IS A PARABLE?

A. The Greek literally means “to throw alongside.”

B. A common definition is, “an earthly story with a heavenly meaning.”

C. It is not an allegory, in which every part has a corresponding meaning. The “classic” example of an allegory in scripture is found in Gal. 4:24-31. There may be allegorical elements within a parable, but the meaning (or lesson) of the parable may be different than these comparisons.

II. WHY DID JESUS TEACH IN PARABLES?

A. Jesus did not invent the parable, they were used in the OT (2Sam. 12:1-4).

Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said, “There were two men in one city, the one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a great many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb Which he bought and nourished; And it grew up together with him and his children. It would eat of his bread and drink of his cup and lie in his bosom, And was like a daughter to him. Now a traveler came to the rich man, And he was unwilling to take from his own flock or his own herd, To prepare for the wayfarer who had come to him; Rather he took the poor man’s ewe lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him.”

B. Jesus fulfilled prophecy in using parables (Isa. 6:9,10; Psa. 78:2).

(Isa. 6:9,10) And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on listening, but do not perceive; Keep on looking, but do not understand.’ Render the hearts of this people insensitive, Their ears dull, And their eyes dim, Lest they see with their eyes, Hear with their ears, Understand with their hearts, And return and be healed.”

(Psa. 78:2) I will open my mouth in a parable; I will utter dark sayings of old,...

C. Jesus used parables to awaken spiritual senses that had grown dull (Mt. 13:12-15).

D. Parables excite the concerned and stimulate more learning for some, while they blind the hearts of those who are careless and unspiritual.

III. WHY STUDY THE PARABLES?

A. We are to live by every word of the Bible (Mt. 4:4).

But He answered and said, “It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’”

B. At least 1/3 of X’s teachings are found in the parables.

C. The parables are “born out of life” and have a way to touching us unlike other methods of teaching.

D. They are mirrors which allow us to see ourselves.

E. They are windows which help us to see life and God.

IV. HOW SHOULD ONE STUDY THE PARABLES?

- A. Study each parable in its own context.
- B. Look for the central or main truth that the parable teaches.
- C. Don't try to make the parables "walk on all fours," in other words the details aren't always important or uniform.
- D. Parables should be used to illustrate and support doctrinal statements, not necessarily declare them. They are windows to see deeper into spiritual concepts, not foundations that declare spiritual truths. The parable of the good Samaritan emphasizes the commands to show hospitality to anyone in need. Who is my neighbor?... anyone in need!
- E. Ask God for wisdom in understanding the parables (Jas. 1:5).
But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.
- F. Pay attention to Jesus' explanation of the parable of the tares, to help one know how to explain and understand all of the other parables (Mt. 13:36-43).

V. THE PARABLE OF THE TARES EXPLAINED.

- A. See **Matthew 13:24-30,36-43**.
- B. Jesus gives the parable in 13:24-30, and then has to explain it in 13:36-43.
- C. (Read the two passages.)
- D. The following analogies are set forth in the parable:
 - 1. Christ is the sower of the seed.
 - 2. The devil sowed the bad seed.
 - 3. Xians are the good seed.
 - 4. Followers of the devil are bad seed.
 - 5. The field is the world.
 - 6. The harvest is the end of the world.
 - 7. The burning of tares represents hell.
 - 8. The reapers and the angels.
 - 9. "While men slept" shows Satan must wait for his opportunities.
 - 10. The gathering "out of his kingdom" suggests a purging of the church on the last day.
- E. But the lesson of the parable is (13:43):
The divinity and glory of X in His sending of the angels to help separate the wicked from the righteous (even in the church)! The righteous will be glorified!

CONCLUSION.

- A. In this study my aim is that you will see a clearer picture of:
 - 1. Who God (and JC) is, and what He is like (a window unto heaven).
 - 2. Who you are, and what you need to become (a mirror unto self).