**The Parables of Jesus-(Part 01)-Introduction**

The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. [Matt 13:10-12]

Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: “I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.” [Matt 13:34-35 *cf.*Psa 78:1-2]

**WHAT WAS JESUS’ MESSAGE?**

As Christians, we are not only worshipers of God but are disciples or servants and believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, if we are truly Christ’s disciples and servants, then, if there is any message or portion of Scripture, we should seek to understand it will be the message of our lord Jesus Christ, what he preached and taught. So, if we can summarize it, what was Jesus’ message?

“From that time on Jesus began to preach, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.” [Mat 4:17]

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel. [Mar 1:14-15 KJV]

Jesus’ message was ‘Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand.’ What then is this kingdom of God or as he calls it in other places, the kingdom of heaven that Jesus Christ preached about?

**WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD?**

We have nowhere else to turn to for the answer to this question than the Scriptures that record for us his priceless words, it is from these we can gain a correct and detailed understanding of what the kingdom of God is.

Now, although Jesus plainly told us some facts about the kingdom of God, the bulk of his message about the kingdom are expressed to us in parables. Jesus nowhere gave us a plain, composite, all-encompassing definition of the kingdom of God but described it in various parables. In fact, we are told that, “he did not say anything to them without using a parable” [Mat 13:34].

**WHAT IS A PARABLE?**

It is a non-literal expression of a truth*(s)*or fact*(s)* about the Kingdom of God using common imagery which may be unconnected to the idea or truth expressed. To be told a parable is to be told something but not plainly or clearly. A parable can be described as truth revealed but in a concealed form.

**WHY PARABLES**

The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?” 11He replied, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. 12Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. [Mat 13:10-12 *cf.*Mat 25:24-25,28-29]

It should be clear enough that Jesus’ words were not simplified by parables for the people did not understand since Jesus had to explain them to his disciples when he was alone with them [Mar 4:34].

Once, when Jesus spoke plainly to his disciples, they were glad [Joh 16:29] which shows that they were not so excited about the parables but really wished he would just speak plainly to them. On a certain occasion Jesus lost many of his disciples [Joh 6:60,66] because he did not speak plainly about his crucifixion and death but instead described it as “eat my flesh and drink my blood” [Joh 6:51-54].

Interestingly, however, Jesus knew that his parables were hard to understand and he implied this was his intention [Mat 13:11-13]. As he did not stop using parables, it is clear he was doing so deliberately.

**A RAY OF HOPE**

Now, notwithstanding the fact that they were designed to conceal the truth from the people, Jesus’ parables were still revelations of God’s truths [Mat 13:35]. Jesus told his disciple that “many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.” [Mat 13:17] Now, if Jesus didn’t want us to know his truths, he wouldn’t have told us at all. Therefore, that we are told the truth means that God desires us to understand it.

Jesus had a purpose in teaching with parables and it was that only those who are diligent and sincere would discover the truth. Are you willing to pay the price? Do you love God that much? [Jer 33:3]

We will be studying some of the parables of Jesus to see what we can learn and understand about the kingdom of God of which he is to be king and of which he preached.

**THE SUBJECT & THEMES OF JESUS’ PARABLES**

Jesus’ parables emphasize and teach different aspects of the Kingdom of God, i.e., none of his parables taught everything that was to be known about the kingdom of God. Taking a closer look at the parables of Jesus, we can see that there are some recurring themes in them, issues Jesus deals within his parables.

1. The gospel of the Kingdom
   1. The reception of the Gospel of the kingdom among men and their response to it
   2. The preaching of the gospel of the Kingdom
2. Major characters in Jesus’s parables, their relationships and their fates in the kingdom,
   1. The King of this Kingdom of God—*(Jesus Christ)*,
   2. his Father—*(God)*,
   3. the servants of the King—*(his disciples)*,
   4. the subjects of the Kingdom and
   5. the enemies of the King
3. The initiation and acquisition and actualization of the kingdom
4. Judgment—rewards and recompense. The final coming of the kingdom of God and its effect on men
5. The different stages of the coming *(or establishment)* of the Kingdom of God from initiation to realization. From this theme, as we will come to see, we can also categorize the parables based on their eschatological value:
6. Eschatological plot
7. Non-eschatological plot