



Parables

A parable is a short narrative from which a spiritual lesson is deduced. The parable gives the outward literal sense which any believer or unbeliever can understand. Parables teach Bible doctrine, which only a believer who already knows some doctrine can understand. The interpretation of parables requires deduction compatible with known Bible doctrine. The characters and incidents are figurative and typical. Proper names and specific geographical locations are never used in parables. For example, the rich man and Lazarus account is not a parable.

Greek word for “parable” is παραβολή (parabolē) and is a compound noun where *para* means beside and *bolē* means to throw. It means to throw a simple incident beside a doctrine to illustrate the doctrine. For example, in the parable of the Sower sowing seeds, the doctrinal application is the believer giving the Gospel (seeds). We need to match each parable with the doctrine Jesus was using in its context. This is very important in the interpretation of parables. So a parable throws an experience alongside of a doctrine to make the doctrine clear.

Example 1 - Pseudo-Spirituality

In Matthew 9:16, “a patch of unshrunk cloth” is a piece of new cloth and represents legalism or spirituality by works. “Old garment” is a cloak that has been washed many times and has completely shrunk and represent the spiritual life of the believer.

“But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results.” (Matthew 9:16, NASB)

This parable teaches that if you take one little patch of legalism (spirituality by works) and superimpose them on the spiritual life, the result is that you destroy the function and effectiveness of the spiritual life. Under grace, it is Who and what God is and God does all the work. It is not who and what man is. Jesus told all the disciples of John that they needed to wake up even though they were already saved.

Example 2 - New Wine in Old Bottles

In Matthew 9:17, “new wine” refers to the Christian way of life based on spirituality by grace. The conversion of *gnosis* (knowledge) to *epignosis* (full knowledge) has impact. “Old wineskins” refer to the wineskins which are Judaism, legalism, intellectual knowledge, and only (*gnosis*) of Bible doctrine.

“Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.” (Matthew 9:17, NASB)

You cannot take the commands to the believer to love all believers, keep His commandments, yield, be humble, and put them in a system called legalism or spirituality by works. If you try, it will not work. It will not be the Christian way of life. They are impossible to execute apart from the filling of the Holy Spirit. It will be legalism without spiritual value or impact. You will have a wineskin that will burst. The believer’s spiritual life will not be functional because they are out of fellowship, so it will have no impact.

Example 3 - Parable of the Ten Virgins

A parable has only one basic meaning. The meaning of this parable is understood only in light of the Isagogics of it, i.e., the Jewish marriage custom. In this parable, the bridegroom represents Jesus Christ



returning to the earth after the wedding of the Bride in Heaven. This occurs in Heaven while the Tribulation is taking place on earth. Matt. 25:1-13.

"Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent." (Matthew 25:1-2, NASB)

"And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut. Later the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, lord, open up for us.' But he answered, 'Truly I say to you, I do not know you.' Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour." (Matthew 25:10-13, NASB)

Virgins were historically the friends of the bride and the groom who lined the pathway and were at the home of the wedding reception who awaited the return of the bride and groom to the wedding feast. Some lined the pathway and some were at the house. At the arrival of the bride and groom at the house, both groups correctly prepared would go into the house with the bride and groom and enjoy the wedding feast as long as the money lasted.

The wise virgins were those who were properly prepared for the return of the bride and groom. The foolish virgins were those who had not prepared. The truth of the parable is based on this historical marriage custom. When the Lord returns, there will be belief (the wise) and unbelief (the foolish) on earth at the end of the Tribulation and prior to the wedding feast, the Millennial Kingdom. The wise get to go into the wedding feast. The foolish cannot go in and are identified as unbelievers by the phrase in Matthew 25:12, "I do not know you." In conclusion, the Lord is describing in parable form the character of those on earth at His second coming and therefore what their destiny will be based on their belief or unbelief in the work He has already completed on the Cross for all of mankind.

Example 4 - Parable of the Talents

The word talent means "a measure of something." The usages of the word "talent" in Scripture and historically include; a measure of money - talent of gold or silver, a measure of weight - hailstones in the book of Revelation, a measure of ability - used universally and historically for one's abilities, and a measure of time - used historically as a measure of time. Matt. 25:14-30.

"For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves and entrusted his possessions to them. To one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey." (Matthew 25:14-15, NASB)

"The one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me. See, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.'" (Matthew 25:20-21, NASB)

"And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground. See, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'" (Matthew 25:24-28, NASB)

To determine the true meaning of this parable, one must keep the parable in its true Tribulational context. It is not speaking of the Church Age, the function in a local church, the function in the Christian



life, or anything close to that. It is describing a characteristic in the Tribulation. Therefore, the correct usage of the term “talent” would be determined on the basis of which of the four usages would naturally come into focus in the Tribulation.

Based on the context, a talent as a measure of money would not be an issue in the Tribulation. Based on the context, talent as a measure of ability would not be a factor either in the Tribulation. The concept of weight would have no bearing on the Tribulation in any way. The true meaning of talent and in harmony with the context, would be the measure of time.

If the meaning is the measure of time, why then, the reference to money? The concept of time is abstract. Most people know the meaning, but would have a hard time explaining it. Often to explain an abstract concept, a more tangible concept is used as an illustration. To a Jewish person, the money concept was obvious. It was a part of their culture and background. Therefore, Jesus takes a tangible idea familiar to the Jewish mind to illustrate in a parable the root idea of time in the true Tribulational context.

The five talents, the two talents and the one talent simply indicate the variety of measures of time allotted for the hearing of the Gospel in the Tribulation. Some people will have but a short time to hear and believe. Others will have more time. No one will have more than seven years.

The key to the passage is Matthew 25:28-29. The person who has used his measure of time properly, that is, he has believed in Christ as personal Savior; his time will be perpetuated into the Kingdom and forever. The person who say had four years before he was killed and never believed on Christ, lost even that which he had. That four years was lost for all eternity. That time in the Kingdom and eternity, which could have been his, is therefore the sole property and sphere of joy of only those who have properly utilized their time.

“Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.” “For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.” (Matthew 25:28-29, NASB)

Therefore, the parable shows that at the Second Coming of the Lord, as in the parable of the Ten Virgins, there will be belief on Earth and unbelief. The parable of the Ten Virgins emphasizes the ones who believe and go into the Kingdom and the Parable of the Talents emphasizes the unbelievers who do not go into the Kingdom.

These are illustrations of what the Lord will find on earth when He returns with His bride is followed by an explanation of what He will do with the two elements of humanity, the believer and the unbeliever.

This is done in the explanation of the sheep and goat illustration. The judgment of the sheep and goat people is not a judgment of nations, but rather the judgment of Gentiles. The basis of the treatment of the 144,000 Jewish evangelists is the evidence of the faith of the believers and the unbelief of the unbelievers. In Matthew 25:41, “accursed ones” is the perfect tense of καταράσθαι (katarasomai) and means that their conduct was a result of their condition, their unbelief in the work of Jesus Christ for salvation.

“Then He will also say to those on His left, ‘Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels;’” (Matthew 25:41, NASB)

The doom of those in the Parable of the Talents is the same as that of the goats. Compare Matthew 25:30 with Matthew 25:46. The doom of those in the Parable of the Ten Virgins is the same as that of the Parable of the Talents and the sheep and goats. Therefore, you have a three-fold parallelism



combining the two parables and the illustration of the sheep and goats.

““Throw out the worthless slave into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matthew 25:30, NASB)

““These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”” (Matthew 25:46, NASB)

Positive volition to the Gospel refers to believers, wise virgins, used time wisely, sheep, expressed faith. Negative volition to the Gospel refers to the unwise, unprepared. hidden talent, unprepared in time, accursed goats who had expressed unbelief in their lack of care of 144,000 evangelists.

The Lord closes the prophecy with an orientation of the Jewish nation to that of the rest of the world. Both the believing Gentiles and the newly born Jewish Nation of believers enter the Kingdom. Also, the Church as the Bride of Christ, Christ as the Bridegroom, Israel as the seed of David, heirs of Abraham, and Christ as the King will enter the Kingdom.