



## DEFINITION OF PARABLES

### 1. Definition

- Here are some definitions of the parables of Christ

### 2. Definitions

- **THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER**
  - Matt. 13:1-9, 18-23; Mark 4:1-9, 14-20; Luke 8:4-15
  - The parable of the sower compares four kinds of ground to four different attitudes toward the word of God.
  - The word is the same. The hearers are different because their hearts are different.
  - Some have hearts that are hardened.
  - Some lack commitment and soon lose interest. Some have an abiding and overpowering desire for the material things of the world.
  - Some hear, understand, and obey.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE TARES**
  - Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43
  - This parable contrasts good and evil—there is evil in the kingdom as well as good.
  - Just as the farmer cannot distinguish the tares in its early stages, neither are we able to identify hypocrites and deceivers at first.
  - As the farmer must be patient before separating the wheat from the tares, so we too must be patient and longsuffering, guarding against rash and premature judgments of people.
  - The parable of the tares is a parable of the harvest, depicting the conflict between good and evil, between God and Satan. Satan is the enemy, but God and good will triumph in the end.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE SEED GROWING IN SECRET**
  - Mark 4:26-29
  - The lesson is the same, both in the natural and spiritual realms.
  - The seed must be sown in order for there to be a harvest.
  - Growth occurs gradually, develops in necessary stages, and takes place by the secret power of God.
  - Patience is necessary, but in due time the seed germinates, grows, and produces a harvest.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED**
  - Matt. 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-19
  - Often the greatest things come from the smallest beginnings. The tiny mustard seed grows and becomes a tree greater than all the herbs. The kingdom (church) gradually increased from a humble and despised beginning until it filled the whole world.
  - The mustard tree provides a lodging place for the birds of the air.

- The kingdom of God continues to grow and offer shelter to those who seek it.
- God's word is pure and steadfast.
- The prophecies of the Old Testament have been fulfilled, and God's plan for the salvation of mankind cannot be thwarted.
- (Acts 2:41) (Acts 4:4) (Acts 5:14)
- **THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN**
  - Matt. 13:33; Luke 13:20-21
  - As the power of the leaven changes the meal, so the power of the gospel of the kingdom has changed the whole world.
  - The leaven which is hidden in the meal works secretly and steadily until the effect of its power is apparent.
  - The gospel which is hidden in the hearts of individuals works mysteriously, spreading gradually until its power influences human society.
  - Each individual Christian must spread the gospel and let his light shine.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE**
  - Matt. 13:44
  - The greatest treasure in this world and the world to come is the kingdom of heaven.
  - Those who find the word of God (the treasure) should joyfully and eagerly be willing to give all they have to obtain the blessings of the kingdom.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE**
  - Matt. 13:45-46
  - We must seek the Lord while He may be found (Isa. 55:6).
  - We must seek first the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33).
  - Those who search diligently will find the kingdom (Matt. 7:7; Heb. 11:6).
  - Pearls are formed in six tropical species of oysters that live on rocky ocean bottoms. The oyster is lined with a smooth, iridescent substance known as mother-of-pearl. When a foreign body such as a grain of sand accidentally becomes trapped within its shell, the oyster gradually covers it with layers of the mother-of-pearl. This process forms the pearl. Cultured pearls, which require about four years to produce, are created by artificially inserting the foreign object into the oyster. Pearls are the only gems made by a living process, and the only gems that come from the sea.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE DRAWNET**
  - Matt. 13:47-50
  - The gospel is for everyone. Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and He extends his invitation to all.
  - The gospel will draw all kinds of people. Some will be good and some will be bad.
  - In the day of judgment there will be a final separation of the good and bad.

- **THE PARABLE OF THE LABORERS IN THE VINEYARD**
  - Matt. 20:1-16
  - God continually seeks those to work in his vineyard (kingdom).
  - God's reward, eternal life, is bestowed by his grace, not by our works. The reward is given to all workers in God's kingdom, whether one comes at an early or late age.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE TWO DEBTORS**
  - Luke 7:36-50
  - All are debtors (sinners) and are in need of God's forgiveness (Rom. 3:23).
  - The sinful woman was saved by her faith. She then expressed her gratitude to Jesus by acts of love. In the same manner when our faith in the Savior leads us to obedience, then our love and gratitude are expressed in our service to him. The greater our sense of sin, the greater will be our gratitude and love (Luke 7:47).
  - Jesus told the woman to go in peace. When our sins are forgiven, we too have peace with God through Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1).
- **THE PARABLE OF THE UNMERCIFUL SERVANT**
  - Matt. 18:21-35
  - We are servants in God's kingdom and our debt is sin.
  - Justice demands that we pay our debt, but God in his mercy sent his Son to die on the cross to pay the debt for us.
  - As God in his loving kindness has forgiven our sins, we ought to forgive those who sin against us.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN**
  - Luke 10:25-37
  - The parable teaches that love and compassion have no limits. "Love your neighbor" includes "love your enemy" (Matt. 5:43-44).
  - The parable illustrates the golden rule, "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise" (Luke 6:31).
  - Love and compassion must be coupled with action. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only..." (Jas. 1:22). Luke 10:27
- **THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN**
  - Matt. 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; Luke 20:9-18
  - God demonstrated his patience and longsuffering toward those who opposed him by sending his messengers, the prophets, and then his only beloved Son.
  - Those who reject the Son of God will be cast out of his kingdom, but those who accept Jesus as the Christ and obey his gospel message will be blessed and received into his kingdom.
- **THE PARABLE OF THE FRIEND AT MIDNIGHT**
  - Luke 11:5-13
  - In praying we must ask, seek, and knock. These three ways to approach God emphasize persistence, for seeking is more than asking, and knocking is more than seeking.
  - God will answer our prayers if our petitions are asked in faith and are according to his will.

### 3. Summary

## Jesus spoke in parables