**PARABLES, “THROUGH PEASANTS EYES!”**

**Study 1, Introduction Part I**

**Overview; Ten parables;**

1. **The Two Debtors, Luke 7:36-50**
2. **The Fox, the Funeral and the Furrow, Luke 9:25-37**
3. **The Good Samaritan, Luke 20:25-37**
4. **The Rich Fool, Luke 12:13-21**
5. **Pilate, the Tower and the Fig Tree, Luke 13:1-9**
6. **The Great Banquet, Luke 14:15-24**
7. **The Obedient Servant Luke 17:7-10**
8. **The Judge and the Widow, Luke, 18:1-8**
9. **The Pharisee and the Tax Collector, Luke 18:9-14.**
10. **The Camel and the Needle, Luke 18:18-30.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

1. Studying parables will be hard work, without that hard work, one can’t get to the decisive pay-offs that each parable brings. This study will look at the ‘vitality and the dynamic’ of the text to bring such pay offs.
2. Parables are written from within the family of believers to the family of faith with the earnest hope to bring the vitality and dynamic of the parable with great pay offs. They’re written by those familiar with Scripture.
3. We need to recover and discover the text and parable from a Middle Eastern Cultural perspective and then great insight will be available. This study borrows much from the Middle Eastern Arabic culture. The author spent 30 years living, studying and worshipping there with them. This is not a study that will debate scholarly opinions about each parable, there are other studies and research that cover this even in this book. The purpose of this study is to introduce NEW DATA than rather review and interpret insights already known.
4. Many times we study Scripture and parables through the lens of what would be most meaningful for us today. We will examine 10 of our Lord’s parables as Palestinian Stories set in Jesus’ ministry. We could say that this material is going to be shaped by the Christian Palestinian community as Jesus continues to teach them by the guidance of the Spirit.
5. The author believes that the oral traditions of this certain community and the teachings of Jesus is in line with the culture of the Palestinian community at that time, it’s virtually indistinguishable. In other words these parables are the authentic teaching of Jesus. It is Palestinian? There are some theologians who ‘rescue’ parables for their own purposes. This isn’t necessarily negative and harmful, but this approach doesn’t’ allow the richness of the literary form seen and revealed within that particular culture and the original intent of the material.
6. Our concern and study is the literary form and underlying culture. The means a more careful study and concern than other ‘contemporary’ studies. The hope is that this study is for the specialist and the non- specialist or ‘clergy and lay person.’

**JUST WHAT IS A PARABLE?**

1. Some say there are 70 parables and some say there are 30 parables in Matthew, Mark and Luke. What is a parable?

-An example-story

-A simile

-Jeremias, a scholar on parable notes; “Post Biblical Judaism that is figurative speech, parables, simile, allegory, fable, proverb, apocalyptical revelation, argument, riddle, symbol, example theme, argument, jest, refutation.”

8. We need to look at how a parable functions in the New Testament, not necessarily its type. When we do this we discover that Parables are not illustrations, they are not arguments set up in abstractions and stories as often seen in Wester society. They don’t help popularize conclusions. According to the parable scholar Mason, “The true parable….is not an illustration to help one through a theological discussion, it is rather a mode of religions experience.”

9. Mason’s comparison; In Luke 9:57-58, “As they were going along the road a man said to him, ‘I will follow you wherever you go.’” If Jesus were a Westerner, he might have responded like this; “Bold statements are easy to make, but you have to consider seriously what it will cost you to follow me. It seems evident that so far you have yet to do so. I must say to you plainly that I can offer you no salary or security. My point is not yet clear, perhaps an illustration will help. For example, I do not even have a bed of my own to sleep on.”

But Jesus replies like this;

*“Foxes have holes,*

*And the birds of the air have nests,*

*But the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head.”*

1. Jesus gives a dramatic confrontation in an unforgettable form. This is a lofty affirmation of Jesus’ character. An impact is made that calls for a response. Theological implications oblige the mind to move out from the center in a number of directions. The response of the disciple is missing. The reader must now respond. This takes place once in an intense dramatic confrontation. A parable has been spoken! To assume that we understand ALL that happens in parable in abstract is to understand its nature, we must try.
2. The parables of Jesus are a concrete/dramatic form of theological language that presses the listener to respond. They reveal the nature of The Kingdom of God, or how a child of God is to act. We now need to ask where parables are to be found.

**PARABLES ARE WHERE YOU FIND THEM**

1. There are 6 different types of formats where parables are found. It is crucial for their interpretation to see how they function in these different settings; the 6 types are;
2. Parable in theological dialogue
3. Parable in a narrative event/story.
4. Parable in a miracle.
5. Parable in topical collection.
6. Parable in poem.
7. Parable standing alone.
8. Each requires a brief examination.
9. The first is a parable in ***theological dialogue.*** An example is between Jesus and Rich Ruler, Luke 18:18-30. The climax of the parable is in the telling of the Camel and the Needle. The parable has a crucial function in the climax of the entire discussion and cannot be isolated from it.
10. The Parable of the banquet at the house of Simon the Pharisee in Luke 7:36-50, is the example of a parable in a ***narrative event****.* The parable of the Creditor and the Two Debtors are part of the story. There is dialogue, but the dramatic actions of the silent woman are the focus of the entire scene.
11. Luke 13:10-17, is a story of the healing of a woman with a spirit of infirmity. This becomes a debate between Jesus and the head of the Synagogue. This parable type overlaps with another one of the 6 types. Yet is a ***miracle story*** and again the parable of the Ox and Ass function as a crucial part of the whole story.
12. Luke 11:1-13, we have a ***topical collection*** on the part of prayer. The Parable of the Friend at Midnight, see Luke 11:5-8, is one part of that collection. One must examine these collections carefully. There can be a number of sayings that can be grouped together. It is difficult to catch the breaks in thought and how to interpret the material.
13. In Luke 11:9-13, we have a carefully composed ***poem*** on prayer. Jesus gives three striking parables in the central stanza of the poem. Their function in that climax is the key to understand the entire poem.
14. Finally, a parable ***stands alone***. In Luke 17:1-10, we have three topics, in rapid succession, each of which has some parabolic speech. There is the parable of the Millstone and the topic of judgment on the tempter. This is followed by the parable of the Mustard Seed and the apostles’ request for faith. Then come the dramatic parable of the Obedient Servant in verses 7-10. These three stand relatively alone with no clear connection to what surrounds them and no specific context.
15. We must come to understand the larger unit of the Scripture to understand what the parable is about. We must know the content of that section of Scripture to determine the content of the parable. With a working definition of what parables are in the New Testament and when they occur, we must then ask how they’re to be interpreted and that is the next class.