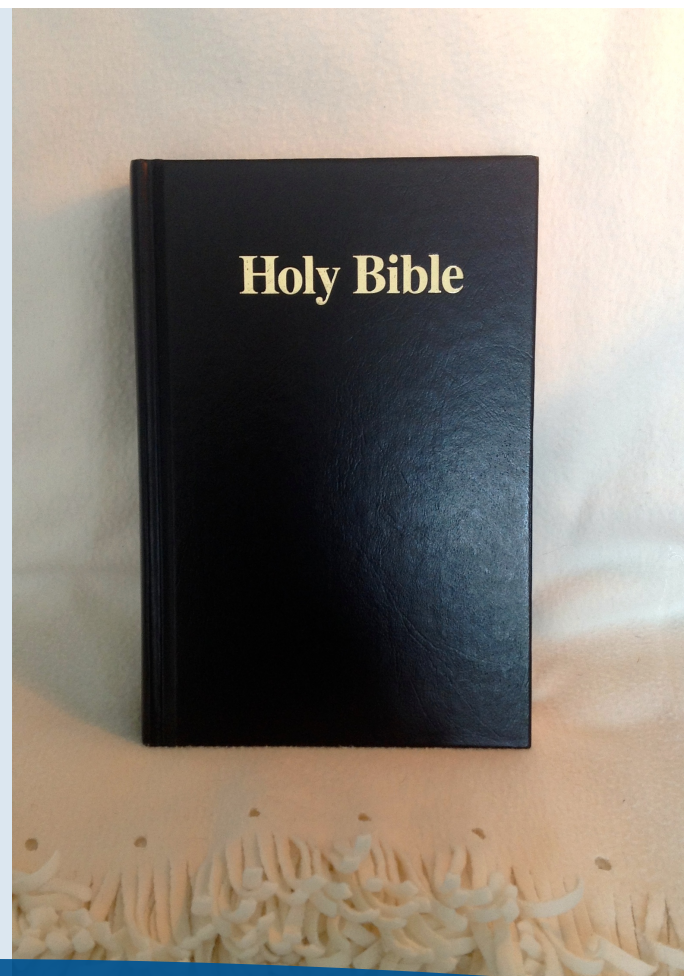


*Unlock the passages of the Bible for yourself*

# Learn to Read the Bible More Effectively

CONSIDERING  
THE  
PARABLES  
OF CHRIST



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Our objective is to help you to read the Bible more effectively.  
For this we need to:

1. DETERMINE LITERAL & FIGURATIVE
2. CONSIDER CONTEXT
3. LOOK UP ORIGINAL WORDS
4. COMPARE SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE

## 1. DETERMINE LITERAL & FIGURATIVE

Parables are an example of figurative speech. What is a Parable ?

A simple story used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson

Middle English: from Old French parabole, from Latin parabola 'comparison',  
from the Greek παραβολή (parabolē), meaning  
"comparison, illustration, analogy."

It was the name given by Greek rhetoricians to an illustration in the form of a  
brief fictional narrative.

## 26 parables of Jesus are recorded in the New Testament

**Only 11 of these are actually announced as being a “parable”.**

But why did Jesus often speak in parables?

Matthew 13:

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, **Why speakest thou unto them in parables?**

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, **but to them it is not given.**

**12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.**

13 **Therefore speak I to them in parables:** because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive:

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them. [Isaiah 6:9,10]

**Let's consider such a parable:**

Luke 16

19 There was **a certain** rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

21 And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

(v19)“**a certain**” does not imply it is a literally true story, e.g:

Luke 13:6

He spake also this **parable**; **A certain** man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

But to continue with ‘The Rich man and Lazarus’:

Luke 16

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, **If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**

## 2. CONSIDER CONTEXT

Now against whom was this parable directed? Verse 14 tells us:

Luke 16

14 And the Pharisees also, **who were covetous**, heard all these things: and they derided him.

Because of this (and their negating of the Law) Jesus spake the parable, as we read:

Luke 16

19 There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:

20 And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,

### **“Lazarus”**

Jesus would have in mind his friend Lazarus of Bethany who was to die and then be raised by Christ-yet the Pharisees and Sadducees would still not believe (see John11:45-53; 12:9-10)  
(The parable was given about that time.)

The parable continues:

Luke 16

22 And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into **Abraham’s bosom**: the rich man also died, and was buried;

### **Abraham’s bosom**

See Josephus’(AD 37-100) “Discourse to the Greeks concerning Hades”  
Which reveals a Plato inspired superstition (Josephus quotes Plato on the Soul) which was current amongst some of the Jews in Jesus’ day, (Josephus was a Pharisee of a Priestly family). His remarks correspond to the parable in Luke16.

Question:

Why should Jesus base a parable on a superstition current in those days if it is not true?

**We need to remember that parables were not meant to clarify but rather perpetuate the confusion of most of the listeners!**

Mark 4:

11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: **but unto them that are without, all [these] things are done in parables:**

12 That seeing they may see, and **not perceive**; and hearing they may hear, and **not understand**; lest at any time they should be converted, and [their] sins should be forgiven them.

:34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, **he expounded all things to his disciples.**

Jesus played along with those who loved error e.g. he said:

Luke 11:19 “And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.”

This does not mean the Jesus believed in Beelzebub

“Beelzebub”

‘Lord of the flies’ or Dung God

(The God of Ekron)

The name Ba'al zebub (Hebrew: בעל זבוב) is found in 2Kings 1:2-3,6,16,....

2Kings 1

2 And Ahaziah fell down through a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria, and was sick: and he sent messengers, and said unto them, Go, enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron whether I shall recover of this disease.

3 But the angel of the Lord said to Elijah the Tishbite, Arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria, and say unto them, Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub the god of Ekron?”

“Rabbinical literature commentary equates Baal Zebub of Ekron as lord of the “fly”” (Wikipedia)

We also note that In the parable of Luke 16 **no mention is made of souls going to heaven at death.** Rather Abraham's Bosom (as explained by Josephus in the first century) as:

**Abraham's Bosom being in the 'nether world of Hades'**

And he gives that as the reason why those in Abrahams Bosom can converse with those in torment. So we see that Abrahams Bosom **does not** support Orthodox doctrine on Heaven and Hell.

## Josephus says regarding the righteous and the wicked in Hades

“A chaos... is fixed between them insomuch that a just man that hath compassion upon them [the tormented], cannot... pass over it [to help them]”

Luke 16: says:-

23 And in hell [Hades] he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

26 And **beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.**

From this it is clear that Jesus is using a current superstition of the Pharisees to both confound them and make a salient point, as he concludes:-

Luke 16:

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.

31 And he said unto him, **If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.**

Now after Jesus raised Lazarus:

John 12:

9 Much people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there: and they came not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10 But the chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death;

So it was as Jesus said: **“If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead”** (nor did Christ's resurrection persuade them)

## So what does the Bible say about “Hell”?

### 3. LOOK UP ORIGINAL WORDS

Ezekiel 32:27 And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down **to hell** with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.

This refers to the ancient military burial customs, i.e. in **the grave**; so we find:

#### **HELL**

the Hebrew is SHEOL rendered hell 31 times; grave 31 times; pit 3 times (KJV)

Smiths Dictionary of the Bible:-

“Hell: this is the word generally and unfortunately used by our translators to render the Hebrew ‘Sheol’. It would perhaps have been better to retain the Hebrew word ‘Sheol’, or else render it always by ‘the grave’ or the pit.”

The Old English word ‘Hell’ originally only meant as much i.e. ‘to cover’ or ‘hide’ as ‘helling potatoes’ and ‘helmet’ (head covering).

### 4. COMPARE SCRIPTURE WITH SCRIPTURE

Psalms 89:48 What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? [sheol] Selah.

Here we must mention the definition of the word soul :

Old Testament Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ [nephesh] - breathing creature.

New Testament Greek ψυχή psyche - same significance  
in the Bible it is simply a reference to natural bodily life, as:-

Psalms 6:

4 Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake.

5 For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave [**sheol**] who shall give thee thanks?”

**So what does Comparing Scripture with Scripture  
reveal about an after-life?**

## Regarding the afterlife; Jesus speaking literally says:

Luke 14

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at **the resurrection** of the just.

15 And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in **the kingdom of God**.

So it is to be through The Bodily Resurrection (at the last day) that “the Just” shall inherit the kingdom.

So lets compare this with one of Christ’s parables on **the Kingdom of God**:

Luke 19

11 And as they heard these things, he added and **spake a parable**, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that **the kingdom of God should immediately appear**.

12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, **and to return**.

13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was **returned, having received the kingdom**, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, **have thou authority over ten cities**.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, **Be thou also over five cities**.

20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin:

21 For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow:



23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, **That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.**

### Recap:

“they thought that the kingdom of God should **immediately appear.**” (v11)

They expected Jesus to re-establish the throne of David and reign as Messiah King in Jerusalem “**immediately**”. Jesus Parable informs them that:-

The “nobleman” (Jesus) must first go “into a far country” (to the right hand of the Father) “to receive for himself [be granted] a kingdom, **and to return.**” (to establish it on earth) (v12)

“when he was **returned, having received the kingdom,** then he commanded these servants to be called unto him” (v15) (To The Judgement)

This is when “**the meek shall inherit the earth**” (Psalm 37:11 also Mat.5:5) as the parable continued:

17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, **have thou authority over ten cities.**

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, **Be thou also over five cities.** (vv17-19)

And so it shall be in the Last Day:

26 For I say unto you, **That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.**

Inheriting the Kingdom is not an automatic right; we have to diligently “seek it” (Mat.6:33 etc) as also:

Luke 13

23 Then said one unto him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And he said unto them,

24 Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

Luke 13

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see **Abraham**, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.

29 And **they shall come** from the **east**, and from the **west**, and from the **north**, and from the **south**, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

The points of the compass apply only to the earth, and Jesus was in the Promised Land of Israel when he said: "**they shall come**".

Finally lets briefly consider the parable of the fig tree:

Mathew 24

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes [Grk. phulay] of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

32 Now **learn a parable of the fig tree**; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves [Grk. phullon], ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors.

The fig tree is a symbol of National Israel eg:

Hosea 9:10

10 I found Israel like grapes in the wilderness; **I saw your fathers as the firstripe in the fig tree** at her first time: but they went to Baalpeor, and separated themselves unto that shame; and their abominations were according as they loved.

Joel 1:7

7 He hath laid my vine waste, and barked **my fig tree**: he hath made it clean bare, and cast it away; the branches thereof are made white.

Jeremiah 24:

5 Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel; **Like these good figs**, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good.

8 And **as the evil figs**, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the LORD, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes,

and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt:

Jeremiah 29:

17 Thus saith the LORD of hosts; Behold, I will send upon them the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, and will make **them like vile figs**, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil.

Centuries before Christ, the Independent State of Israel ceased to exist, and only re emerged in May 1948 as the modern state of Israel. This is a sign of the approaching return of Christ, who will appear with the resurrected immortalised believers to deliver Israel from being destroyed in the battle of Armageddon:

Revelation 16

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.

16 And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.

Revelation 1

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

Zechariah 12

10 And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

Matthew 23

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.