

# **PARABLES & MIRACLES**

THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS ALREADY HERE  
... AND YET TO COME

# PARABLES

- "Why do you use parables?" Jesus rejoices that the Father has "hidden things from the wise" and "revealed them to babes".

- **The good seed and the weeds** (Mt 13:24) - Now? No. Barn or burn. Long suffering of God until the harvest.
- **The storehouse** (Mt 13:51) - balancing the ancient law with its fulfillment. Today's issues?
- **What defiles a man** (Mk 7:1) - "unclean" food abrogated; the Corban hypocrisy
- **The servant in debt** - forgiven a lot but doesn't pay it forward even a little. To jail, then, where you get to pay back every penny (beam v splinter)
- **The Good Samaritan** (Lk 10) - who's the neighbor in "Love your neighbor as yourself"?
- **Strive for the narrow door** (Lk 13) "Lord, Lord!" (Patriarchs right there!)
- **The fig tree** (Lk 13) - fertilize it, give it a second chance before cutting it down
- **Negative RSVPs** (Lk 14) - open house, then: Gentiles & "sinners"
- **99** (Lk 15) - Look at him eating with sinners!
- **The prodigal son** (Lk 15) The Father runs out! I identify with the older brother
- **The clever dishonest steward** (Lk 16) - Cheats to get in good with the master's debtors to secure his future; the master commends his cleverness; Pharisees saw money as sign of blessing. Moral: Get in good with the poor!
- **Lazarus and the rich man** (Lk 16) - Great chasm; even if the dead were raised!

- **Left behind** (Lk 17) - who's who? (& the Revelation revelation)
- **The importunate widow** (Lk 18) - "Vindicate me!" - Nag the judge!
- **The Pharisee and the tax collector** (Lk 18) Stay humble
- **The laborers in the vineyard** (Mt 20) - Generosity; Jews, Gentiles, and Abuelo
- **The talents** (Mt 25) - double meaning; "what you make of yourself"
- **The 2 sons sent to work** (Mt 21) - actions louder than words (Mom's visual)
- **The murderous vine dressers** (Mt 21) - servants (prophets) sent to get fruit; even the son (figured they were the heirs); Nope - kingdom taken from you!
- **Fig leaves sign of the coming end times** (Mk 13) - "But of that hour..." (But hey, knock yourself out beating Jesus)
- **The 10 women, 5 with oil for lamps**, 5 leave to get more, shut out (Mt 25)
  - Be ready!
- **The shepherd separating the goats from the sheep** (Mt 25) - good faith works
- **"Living water" to the Samaritan woman** (Jn 4) - nun's lesson of physical v spiritual growth
- **The Vine and the branches** (Jn 15) pruning - Who's who

# MIRACLES

- The memory of him as healer is as old as the memory of him as a teller of parables. *His miracles may be the only reason we remember his parables.*
- Jewish historian Josephus' *Antiquities* describes him as "a doer of wonderful deeds, a teacher of people who receive the truth with pleasure".

- **Wedding at Cana** (Jn 2) - "Hour", "Woman", six 30 gallon jugs (!)
- **Cures son of official at Cana** (Jn 4) - already saw miracles in Judea. Shouldn't need new ones. But go, your son will live...
- **Catch fish in the draught** (Lk 5) - tearing the nets; fishers of men
- **Defeats Satan, cures Peter's Mother in Law, cures others** (Mk 1, 8) - goes to pray; "They're looking for you"; "I came to preach"
- **Cures a leper** (Mk 1) - "If you will it"; "I do"; "Tell no one" Couldn't go anywhere; the roof tiles
- **Forgives sins and heals a paralytic** (Mk 2) - spells it out!
- **Cures on the Sabbath** (Mk 3); **paralytic** (Jn 5) - "Lord over the Sabbath"; **woman** (Lk 13) - hypocrites! → plot to kill
- **Centurion's son** (Lk 7) - "Not worthy that you should enter under my roof". "Not even in all of Israel!"
- Compassion makes John in prison ask of Jesus "Are you the one or are we to wait for another?" (Lk 7) A: "Tell him what you see..." and "Blessed the one who takes no offense at me (!) ie Messiah Savior first, Messiah judge second
- **Woman with evil spirits** (Lk 8), **Dumb & blind demoniac** (Mt 12) - "Beelzebul!" JC: Of a house divided, or of God? Then the unforgivable sin: blasphemy against Son of Man, forgivable. Against the Holy Spirit, not forgivable (willful ignorance)
- **Stills the storm** (Mk 4) "Ye of little faith"; Conquers evil in sickness *and* in nature.
- **Tames the evil spirit Legion** (Mk 5); swine "unclean", into the ocean (ie utter destruction)

- **Jairus' daughter / touching the robe** (Mk 5)- "Who touched you?!"; From "healed" to "made well"; "Only sleeping."
- **Multiplication of loaves** (Mk 6, Mk 8) - you believe not because of the signs (!) but because of the bread; the work of God is that you believe in the Son.
- **Walks on water** (Mk 6) - "It's a ghost!"; Peter of little faith!
- **Faith of Gentile woman** (Mk 7) - the demonic daughter & crumbs to the dogs
- **Cures a deaf mute** (Mk 7) - "Ears to hear, eyes to see" (Mk 8) no more signs!
- **cures the blind man** (Mk 8) - gradual, not instant
- **The Transfiguration** (Mt 17) - JC alone (no Moses or Elijah); Elijah *has* come
- **Cures demonic son** (Mk 9) "If you can..."; "Help my unbelief!" "Only with prayer and fasting." Epilepsy? Not the point.
- **Coin from the fish** for temple tax (Mt 17) - "The King doesn't take taxes from his sons" (LOL)
- **Power to the seventy and the 12 to drive demons out** (Lk 10, Mt 9) - snakes and poison (still necessary?) "Don't rejoice in the power, but in your place in heaven"; "Shake the dust"
- **10 lepers - only 1 grateful** (Lk 17) "healed" to "well"; ingratitude
- **Cures man born blind** (Jn 9) -attitude! "He is old enough to speak for himself"; "From God or a demon after he opened my eyes?!"; "You would teach us?"; "You say you see, so you remain blind!"
- **Raises Lazarus** (Jn 11) - Let it to happen (yet wept !); "I *am* the resurrection." The Caiaphas irony: "Better one man be killed for the many".
- Couldn't do miracles except a few in his own town (!) (Mk 6)

# DE-DEMYTHOLOGIZING THE RESURRECTION

- Raymond E. Brown: A modern theologian might declare "My faith would not be disturbed if they found the body of Jesus in Palestine". That's irrelevant to the Bible. We are not asked to believe in the resurrection on the authority of a theologian but on the authority of an apostolic witness. The real question is would the faith of *Peter and Paul* be disturbed if they found the body of Jesus in Palestine? They preached a risen Jesus whose body had not corrupted in the grave. There is not an iota of NT evidence that any Christian thought the body of Jesus was still in the grave corrupting... If any Jewish nonbeliever could have pointed to the body, the Christian proclamation would be impossible.
- Misconceptions: "Spiritual" (v. bodily); "State of Mind" (v. New Jerusalem);
- On the Ascension: Heaven v. Heavens / what they knew in their "primitive" thinking that we "moderns" have forgotten

# OTHER MIRACLES?

- **Buddha**- Miracles attributed to Buddha are added long after his death and go against his teachings. Buddha told his followers "Look not to me but to my *dharma* (doctrine)", and it wouldn't make sense for him to intervene in a nature that he taught was an illusion in the first place.
- **Mohammed** - Miracles attributed to Mohammed are also well after his death and go against the Koran, in which God tells Mohammed when asked for a sign to say "Signs are in the power of God alone. I am only a plain spoken warner". (Sura 29:50)
- **Modern miracles** - "Blessed are those who believe without seeing". Thank you, Jesus! Reports of Jesus in a piece of toast and televangelists in stadiums healing swooning believers with the wave of an arm or a jacket don't feel like the miracles of the Gospel to me.
- **Rarity of miracles** - CSL's pebble / lottery example; "God does not shake miracles into nature at random. They are found at the great ganglions of our spiritual history. If your own life does not happen to be near one of those great ganglions, how should you expect to see one? If we were heroic missionaries, apostles, or martyrs, it would be a different matter... It's idle to complain that he heals those whom he happens to meet, not those whom he doesn't. To be a man means to be in one place and not in another." (Note on the efficacy of prayer and the dignity of causality).
- **Marian apparitions and causes of saints** - some of these are approved by the Vatican, though they are not binding on the faithful (we are free to believe or disbelieve them).

# IN SUMMARY

- Common themes in the parables: the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders. **Be on guard for your own hypocrisy.** Do we practice what we preach?
- **Be ready!** Be prepared. We don't know the day or hour when our souls will be "required of us".
- **Be that neighbor.** Are we procrastinating in being the neighbor? Are we being that neighbor in our homes as well as out in the world?
- The miracles: **believe in the miracles.** They were *meant* to be a sign of Jesus' divinity *and* to reinforce his preaching.
- Don't (~~look for~~) depend on other "signs".

# **LORD, I BELIEVE**

***Lord, I believe. Lord, I believe.***

***I believe you are the Christ. Lord, I believe.***

*I believe you were born of a virgin.*

*I believe you suffered and died.*

*I believe you rose from the dead. I believe you are alive.*

***(Lord I believe...)***

*I believe that you ascended. I believe you've sent your Spirit.*

*I believe that you will come again. Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!*

***(Lord I believe...)***