

# DE 5340 | THE PARABLES OF JESUS

3 sem. hrs.

## I. Course Description

Methods of interpreting Jesus' parables are surveyed and then an eclectic model drawing on the best insights of each is applied to each of the major narrative parables in the Gospels. Conclusions are drawn concerning the theology and significance of this portion of Jesus' teaching.

## II. Course Objectives

It is hoped that the student will be able to:

- A. Explain the different schools of thought in the interpretation of the parables of Jesus, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and adopt an approach he or she can defend as the most hermeneutically viable.
- B. Evaluate the authenticity of the parables and compare and contrast them with their Jewish backgrounds.
- C. Itemize some of the most significant differences among paralleled accounts of the same parables in the various gospels, suggest plausible reasons for that variation, and determine the most likely theological distinctives of each of the three Synoptists in their presentations of the parables.
- D. Summarize the main content and lessons of the major narrative parables.
- E. Explore the more controversial points of interpretation surrounding the details of various individual passages and formulate tentative exegetical conclusions.
- F. Apply the parables to contemporary Christian living and ministry in a faithful and effective fashion.

## III. Course Materials

All required course materials can be purchased through the **TEDS bookstore (800.456.7323 / 847.317.6800)**.

Blomberg, Craig L. *The Parables of Jesus*, Audio Lectures and Study Guide. Grand Rapids, MI: Institute of Theological Studies, a division of OUTREACH, INC., 1993.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Interpreting the Parables*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1990.

Wenham, David. *The Parables of Jesus*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1989.

Kistemaker, Simon. *The Parables: Understanding the stories Jesus told*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980.

An **NIV Bible** and any synopsis or harmony of the four gospels (i.e., that lays out parallel texts in parallel columns for easy comparison). E.g., K. Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels* (New York: UBS, 1982).

#### **IV. Course Requirements**

##### A. Reading of Major Text

Attached to this syllabus are eleven "quizzes" designed to test the reading of the major text by Blomberg. The reading assignments, correlated with the lectures by Dr. Blomberg, are given with each quiz.

##### B. Reading of Supporting Texts

Kistemaker and Wenham should be read in their entirety. Ideally, the student should read the treatments by these two authors of any given parable at the same time as they read Blomberg's treatment of it, at the appropriate point in the course accompanying lectures #9-20. A three to six page double-spaced typed paper conforming to seminary standards should be written for each book, comparing and contrasting each work with Blomberg's perspectives. Approximately one-third of each paper should point out similarities in methods and conclusions; approximately one-third should call attention to differences; and the final third should assess which of the two approaches, where they differ, is preferable and why.

##### C. Exegetical Assignment

Utilizing a selection of the books reflected in the bibliography below, or works of comparable detail and quality approved by the student's seminary advisor, the student must prepare a ten-page intensive study of one of the parables of Jesus analyzed in this series of tapes. Each item in the six objectives should be addressed, but more attention should center on items #4-#6. In other words, following whatever logical organization the student chooses, the paper should:

1. Display awareness of at least three different approaches to interpreting the particular parable and defend an approach the student deems best.
2. Note which parts of the passage have been questioned by scholars not inclined to assign the entire text to the historical Jesus and assess their objections.
3. Fit the parables into their historical context in Jesus' life and their literary context of the gospels (noting any way they differ from one gospel to the next, if the parable appears in more than one gospel).

4. Decide what he/she thinks the central truth or truths of the parable are.
5. Take a stand on any controversial points of interpretation within the passage.
6. Suggest relevant and legitimate applications of the parable to contemporary Christian living.

All conclusions not original to the student must be appropriately documented and defended by logical argumentation, not merely affirmed. The paper is to comply with the guidelines of the *TIU Style and Format Guide* which can be obtained from the Distance Education office. You may contact us to obtain these at 800.588.7705, ext. 6554/847.317.6554 or email the Distance Education office. This assignment is best completed after all the lectures have been heard and all the required reading completed so that the various issues are better understood.

#### D. Final Exam

The final exam will cover the various interpretive approaches to the parables, the contribution of redaction criticism to parable interpretation, the kingdom of God and Christology in the parables, and the parables of the Matthew 13, the Prodigal Son, Good Samaritan, Wicked Tenants, and the Talents. The final is a 2 hour, closed book, short essay exam.

#### E. Online Discussion

The student is required to participate in the discussion areas of TriNet- the online community of Trinity's Division of Open Studies. Thoughtful responses should be given to at least one question in each discussion area, and responses to the comments of other students are encouraged.

### V. **Course Grading**

Quizzes	10%
Papers on Kistemaker and Wenham (15% each)	30%
Exegetical Paper	30%
Final Exam	25%
TriNet Discussion Participation	5%

All assignments should be submitted directly to your Course Tutor using the Submit Work icon within your TriNet course. Exams should be mailed by your proctor to the address below. Course work may be submitted by mail if necessary.

Distance Education  
 Trinity International University  
 2065 Half Day Road  
 Deerfield, IL 60015

If you have questions related to your assignments, please contact your Course Tutor in TriNet. All other questions should be directed to the Distance Education office (email or 847-317-6554).

## **VI. Bibliography of Recommended Books for Exegetical Papers**

Bailey, Kenneth E. *Poet and Peasant: A Literary-Cultural Approach to the Parables of Jesus*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976.

Bailey, Kenneth E. *Through Peasant Eyes: More Lucan Parables*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980.

Beasley-Murray, G. R. *Jesus and the Kingdom of God*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986.

Borsch, Frederick H. *Many Things in Parables*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

Carlston, Charles E. *The Parables of the Triple Tradition*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975.

Crossan, John Dominic. *In Parables: The Challenge of the Historical Jesus*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.

Dodd, C. H. *The Parables of the Kingdom*. London: Nisbet, 1935.

Donahue, John R. *The Gospel in Parable*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988.

Drury, John. *The Parables in the Gospels*. London: SPCK, 1985.

Hendrickx, Hermann. *The Parables of Jesus*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986.

Hultgren, Arland. *The Parables of Jesus: A Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000.

Hunter, A. M. *Interpreting the Parables*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960.

Jeremias, Joachim. *The Parables of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972.

Jones, Peter R. *The Teaching of the Parables*. Nashville: Broadman, 1982.

Kirk, Andrew. *The Good News of the Kingdom Coming*. Downers Grove: IVP, 1983.

Kissinger, Warren S. *The Parables of Jesus: A History of Interpretation and Bibliography*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1979.

Linnemann, Eta. *The Parables of Jesus: Introduction and Exposition*. London: SPCK, 1966.

Longenecker, Richard N., ed. *The Challenge of Jesus' Parables*. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2000.

McArthur, Harvey K., and Robert M. Johnston. *They Also Taught in Parables*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990.

Scott, Bernard B. *Hear Then the Parable*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1989.

Stein, Robert H. *Introduction to the Parables of Jesus*. Philadelphia: Westminster, 1981.

Via, Dan O., Jr. *The Parables: Their Literary and Existential Dimension*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967.

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