

*Unto you it is
given to know the
Mysteries of the
Kingdom of God.
~Luke 8:10~*

Parables

in the

Gospel of Luke

Manitoulin Youth Conference 2008

January 2008

Dear Young People,

Our Study for the 2008 Youth Conference is Parables in the Gospel of Luke. In this study we'll be looking at up to 15 parables from Luke's gospel, and these will be considered under 5 themes – Spiritual Foundations, The Atonement, Materialism, The Lost, and The End of an Age. In order to shorten the size of the book this year, a few of the parables which we were going to include in the book have been removed, and will be available on the youth conference website for those who wish to do some additional study.

As the title suggests, each of these parables will be considered specifically from the perspective of Luke's Gospel. Luke, being a physician, provides us with an interesting perspective of these parables, as he records his gospel with a view in mind to the healing of the spiritually sick. Whether we are young or old, we all have to deal with the illness of sin. As a result, the lessons and principles we can take out of these studies are invaluable to us as we each journey towards the Kingdom.

The parables we'll be considering in this study deal with a variety of issues – from personal issues (such as how we spend our time and money), to ecclesial issues (such as the challenges we face when preaching to people, and seeking after our brethren who have gone astray). We'll also see wonderful pictures develop of Christ, the ecclesia, the development and character of the apostasy, and of our relationships one with another. With such a wide variety of topics and issues that come out of these parables, we believe that this study will prove to be an excellent basis for discussions at the conference.

In order to get the most out of this study, and to be well prepared for the discussions at conference, we would encourage you to start your studies early. Take the time to look at some of these parables on your own in order to develop some of your own thoughts; and take a look at some of the writings of other brethren on these things, so as to give yourself a broader perspective. One of the nice things about parables is that they are not limited to one single interpretation or application, and because of this there can be many ways that the parables can be applied to our life in the truth. So avail yourself of the various books, magazine articles, and talks that are available on this subject.

Finally, if you end up running into any problems while doing the book, or if you have any questions, comments, or just wish to share ideas with us, then please don't hesitate to communicate with us. Questions and comments specifically related to themes 1, 2, or 5 (Spiritual Foundations, The Atonement, and The End of an Age), should be directed to Bro. Darryl; and those related to themes 3 or 4 (Materialism and The Lost), should be directed to Bro. Tim.

May God bless you in your studies.

Yours in Christ,

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Note: Questions related to the parables enclosed in brackets will be available online, but are not necessary to complete before coming to conference.

The following Study Aids may be useful to you in your studies:

- Behold The Man – The Testimony Magazine Special Edition 2007
- The Christadelphian Magazine on CD-ROM
- Parables of the Messiah by Bro. John Carter
- The Parables of Christ by Bro. Robert Roberts
- Parables by Bro. John Bilello
- Nazareth Revisited by Bro. Robert Roberts
- Studies in the Gospels by Bro. Harry Whittaker

Also, don't forget to use your Bible Study Tools:

- Strong's Concordance
- Cross-References
- The Treasury of Scriptural Knowledge
- Bible Dictionaries / Encyclopedia's



If you do not have Bible software on your computer, there are some online tools such as:

www.biblegateway.com and www.biblestudytools.net

Or, you could download your own Bible Study program for FREE at www.e-sword.net.

Parables in the Gospel of Luke

Parable	Passage	Parallel Passage	
The Patched Cloth & Wineskins	Luke 5: 36-39	Matt. 9:16-17	Mark 2: 21-22
Blind Leaders / Mote & Beam	Luke 6: 39-42	Matt. 5:3-5	
Trees & Fruit	Luke 6: 43-45	Matt. 7:15-20	
The Two Builders	Luke 6: 46-49	Matt. 7:24-27	
The Two Debtors	Luke 7: 41-43		
The Sower	Luke 8: 4-15	Matt. 13:3-23	Mark 4:1-20
The Candle & The Bushel	Luke 8: 16	Matt. 5:14-16	Mark 4:21-22
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Friend at Midnight	Luke 11: 5-13		
Strong Man Spoiled	Luke 11: 17-23	Matt. 12:24-30	Mark 3:22-27
Unoccupied House	Luke 11: 24-26	Matt. 12:43-45	
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The Rich Fool	Luke 12: 16-21		
The Goodman of the House	Luke 12: 35-40	Matt. 24:42-44	
Faithful and Evil Servants	Luke 12: 41-48	Matt. 24:45-51	
The Fig tree in the Vineyard	Luke 13: 6-9		
Mustard Seed & Leaven	Luke 13: 18-21	Matt.13:31-33	Mark 4:30-32
Lowest Place	Luke 14: 7-11		
Rules of Host	Luke 14: 12-14		
Great Supper	Luke 14: 16-24		
Tower Builder / Warrior King	Luke 14: 28-33		
Salt	Luke 14: 34-35	Matt. 5:13	Mark 9:49-50
Lost Sheep	Luke 15: 3-7		
Lost Coin	Luke 15: 8-10		
Lost Son	Luke 15: 11-32		
Unjust Steward	Luke 16: 1-13		
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Unprofitable Servants	Luke 17: 7-10		
Unjust Judge	Luke 18: 1-8		
Pharisee & Publican	Luke 18: 9-14		
Camel & Needles Eye	Luke 18: 25	Matt. 19:24	Mark 10:25
The Pounds	Luke 19: 11-27		
The Husbandman in the Vineyard	Luke 20: 9-18	Matt. 21:33-41	Mark 12:1-9
The Fig Tree	Luke 21: 29-31	Matt. 24:32-33	Mark 13:28-29

“And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.” ~ Mark 4:33-34

Why In Parables?

In the simplest of terms a parable may be described as a fictional story which the listeners could relate to, that contained a lesson within it that could be put into practice in daily life. And while this description may be completely true, we mustn't think that the parables which were given by our Lord were merely simple stories with simple lessons. They taught divine principles and divine lessons in a way not otherwise possible, and in a way that could be easily recollected and passed on.

In Proverbs we are told that "it is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter," (Proverbs 25:2); and the reason Christ gives in Matthew 13:10-17 for speaking in parables, ties directly into this. Simply put, the purpose was to divide his audience between those who were truly interested in what he had to say, from those who were not.

Thus, the parables had the dual affect of revealing aspects of the truth and making it easier to understand for those who truly desired it, and of concealing the truth and making it harder to understand for those who were ignorant and not really interested. Christ therefore declared, "For whosoever hath (i.e. those who have an interest, and who are of a humble spirit), to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not (i.e. those who are proud and do not desire the truth, and who willingly walk in ignorance), from him shall be taken away even that he hath." (Matthew 13:12).

This is the effect parables have, and they require an initial level of understanding in order to know what they mean. For us, the parables are easy to understand because we have a full picture of the purpose of God. Our eyes have been opened to the understanding of the gospel message, and we understand the things that have been written elsewhere in the Word which complement the meaning of the parables. For this we should be truly thankful.

But there are those who are willingly ignorant. Christ describes them as having a heart that is waxed gross, ears that are dull of hearing, and eyes that are closed, (Matt. 13:15). Those who are of this way, who should know better, and who Paul declares to be "without excuse" (Rom. 1:20), God has made it harder for them to understand The Truth. The parables confuse matters for them, and indeed, sometimes they even cater to their vain deceits (such as with the Rich man and Lazarus).

This is exactly in accordance with how God said he would treat such individuals – He would confirm their intentions. If a man decides that he wants to be in ignorance of the truth, God will keep Him in ignorance: "God gave them up to uncleanness... gave them up unto vile affections... gave them over to a reprobate mind" (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). In 2 Thessalonians 2, Paul says that God would send a strong delusion, that those who chose to receive not the love of The Truth should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who had pleasure in unrighteousness," (2Thess. 2:10-12). This is how God worked with Pharaoh in Egypt, it's how He worked with the ignorant in Christ's day, and it's how He works with people today, "that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand," (Luke 8:10).

How truly blessed we are then, to know The Truth, and to be able to understand these things, as Christ declared, "blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear," (Matt. 13:16). For us, the parables make The Truth easier to understand and enhance our understanding of it, bringing to light things that are necessary to understand about our nature and our high calling.

Tips For Studying The Parables

Whenever we study a parable, there are some things we always want to take note of:

1. The Context:

Whatever interpretation we give to a parable, it must fit the context. Identify who the parable was being addressed to, the problem Christ wished to address, where it was being given, what the events were that led up to the parable, and also look at the surrounding teaching.

2. Old Testament Echoes:

Many of the parables draw directly upon teaching, stories, or real events that took place in the Old Testament. We must look for those echoes and familiarize ourselves with those passages where the parable is being drawn from, knowing that Christ's audience would've known them well.

3. Other Echoes:

Look for other echoes in both the Old and New Testaments. Search for similar ideas, or the same combination of key words, which might provide us with practical examples of the parable or lead us to other passages where the parable is being drawn upon or made allusion to. Echoes can be found by using cross-references, a concordance, or the Treasury of Scripture Knowledge.

4. The Theme of Scripture:

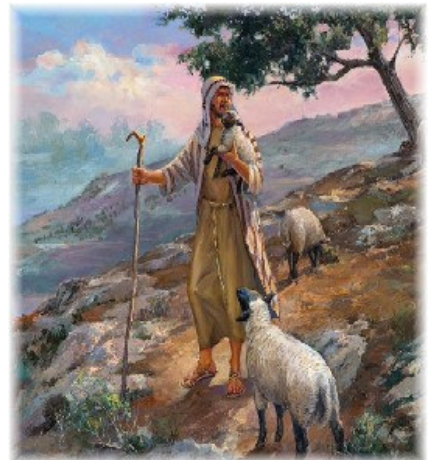
The whole of scripture follows the theme established in Genesis 3:16, where God pronounced an enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. This battle between the thinking of the flesh and the mind of the spirit plays itself out throughout scripture on a number of levels. Everything from the historical accounts to prophecy follow this theme, and the parables are no exception. We must, therefore, consider the parables in their larger context and not exclude them from such things as Bible prophecy. (Indeed, many of the parables tie in very nicely to some of the prophecies given in Daniel and Revelation).

5. The Use of Symbols & Imagery:

Parables, like prophecy, were given in symbol, and were never intended to be interpreted literally. Imagery was used based on what people were familiar with, and sometimes that imagery had no basis in reality (as is the case with The Rich Man and Lazarus). The images used though, were absolutely perfect for what they stood to represent, so we must think about them carefully.

6. Note The Peculiarities:

Often included in parables is either something utterly absurd, or completely unjust. This was a technique used by Christ in order to teach us something important. For instance, in the parable of the lost sheep, what shepherd would actually leave the 99 behind to search for 1 lost one? Yet this was put there to teach us that we must go to absurd degrees to recover our brethren who have gone astray. Or, in the parable of the Husbandmen in the Vineyard, what would make the husbandmen possibly think that by killing their master's son they would get the inheritance? Yet this was to show the religious rulers at the time just how irrational their reasoning was.



The Gospel of Luke – Its Author & Theme

There is very little that we know about Luke from scripture, and yet his writings comprise about 1/3 of the New Testament (being both the author of the gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles). We know that Luke was a Gentile, and was in fact the only gentile writer of a New Testament book. Traditionally Luke is thought to be of Antioch in Syria, later becoming a resident of Philippi before coming into contact with Paul in Troas, where it is believed that he learned the gospel.

Luke's Occupation:

The name Luke is that of a slave, and as such, it is possible that he might've been responsible for the early education of the children in the family to which he belonged. We also know from Colossians 4:14, along with numerous other clues spread throughout his writings, that Luke was a physician. From his detailed writings in the Acts of the Apostles concerning Paul's experiences on the sea, it has been suggested that before he came to an understanding of the gospel, Luke was a doctor on board a ship.

All of these experiences seem to have had a great influence upon him – an influence which comes through in his writings, and one which gave him a very unique appreciation and perspective of the gospel message that other writers of the New Testament did not have.

Being a Gentile, Luke would have been particularly interested in the way in which the gospel message had been opened up to the Gentiles; and as a physician, Luke would have had a special appreciation for the illness that affects all mankind – that of sin and death, and of the healing power that the acceptance of the gospel message could have upon a person.

In accordance with this, it is interesting just to note that the words Salvation, Save, Savior, as well as Joy, Rejoicing, and related terms appear more frequently in Luke's gospel than in Matthew and Mark's accounts – words which speak of the healing properties of the gospel message and the joy it can bring to people's lives.

Being a physician also meant that Luke had a considerable amount of concern and thought for the well-being of others, especially those of a lower class. It comes as no surprise then, that in his writings Luke places a special emphasis upon the sick, poor, and those considered to be of a lower status (such as the women and outcasts).

The Theme of Luke's Gospel:

The theme of Luke's gospel is stated for us in Luke 1:4 – “That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed”. The word “certainty” used here by Luke literally means security, as well as steadfast and firm, and is used in Acts 5:3 by Luke to describe a well-secure prison. Luke's goal in writing therefore, was to provide us with the instruction necessary to keep us firm and unshakable in our faith in the face of all forms of danger, both from within and without.

Luke's Gospel - The Face of a Man:

To this end, Luke depicts Christ in his gospel as the man – and not just any man, but the man who was the priest; the one who was tempted in all ways as we are, yet was without sin. By this means, Luke provides us with Christ's example and teachings that are directly related to battling and overcoming our sinful nature.

In comparing the way in which Luke records some of the parables in his gospel to the way they are recorded in Matthew and Mark's accounts, and in noting the small and seemingly insignificant differences – from the words which Luke has added, to those which he has taken away, to those which he has completely changed – we find that Luke brings things to our attention that have to do with our nature and the battle we face with it each day. (This especially becomes apparent in the Parable of the Sower and in the Parable of the Two Builders, which attention will be drawn to in this study). He makes us aware of the affect our nature can have upon us; he helps us to stay spiritually alert by warning us of the dangers that exist and the traps that we can fall into in life; he help us to recognize the early signs of spiritual illness; and he provides us with instruction for times when we do fail.



“They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”~ Luke 5:31-32

Theme 1 – Spiritual Foundations

The Two Builders, The Sower, The Mote & The Beam

When we speak about spiritual foundations, we are concerning ourselves with those principles of our faith which are described by Luke as “the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ” (Acts 8:12). These foundation principles which our pioneer brethren described as The Truth to be Received and The Commandments of Christ, are the fundamentals of our faith, without which we would be without hope and without God in this world (Eph. 2:12). Those principles have such an impact on our life that it is our understanding of them and their application to life which determines the way we will live our lives in the sight of our Heavenly Father.

These things in mind, in this section we consider two parables which focus on the spiritual foundations of our faith: The Two Builders and The Sower. The first of these emphasizes the absolute necessity of finding and building upon the foundation, while the second focuses on the barriers to building on this foundation. For those who wish to do further study, available on the youth conference website are questions related to a third parable under this theme – The Mote & The Beam, which emphasizes the need for spiritual leaders to have a clear perception of those foundational elements of the faith, if they are to lead people in the way of righteousness.

Each of these parables emphasize the need for all disciples of Christ to be bearing the fruits of righteousness, the absolute necessity of building upon the one foundation by having a clear understanding and perception of the principles of the truth if we are to bear those fruits, and that there is only one way that leads to eternal life.

Truly, it is only with a clear view of the foundations of our faith that we will be able to faithfully endure the trials and temptations in life, and not fall away to the thinking of man or apostate religions that build upon that way of thinking which is natural to man, being after the course of this world.



The Two Builders ~ Luke 6:46-49

1. Luke 6:46 establishes the background to this parable. What is the problem Christ saw in his listeners? What two groups does he break them down into? How can we fall into these categories today?

When we compare Luke’s account of this parable to Matthew’s (Matt. 7:24-27), a number of small differences will appear in the way that they are recorded. The following chart highlights these differences, some of which will be considered as we progress through our study of this parable.

Phrases Omitted By Luke:	Phrases Added By Luke:	Words Changed By Luke:
• “Wise Man” – <i>Matt 7:24</i>	• “Digged Deep” – <i>v48</i>	• “Sand” changed to “earth”
• “Foolish Man” – <i>Matt 7:26</i>	• “Laid the Foundation” – <i>v48</i>	
• “Rain Descended” – <i>Matt 7:25</i>	• “Streams Beat Vehemently” – <i>v48</i>	
• “Winds Blew” – <i>Matt 7:27</i>	• “Could not shake it” – <i>v48</i>	
	• “Without a Foundation” – <i>v49</i>	
	• “Immediately it Fell” – <i>v49</i>	

2. Note the similarities and differences that exist between the two builders and the destruction of their homes in Luke’s account:

Similarities:

Differences:

3. Luke specifically omits mention that one man was wise and the other foolish (see chart above). What might Luke be trying to draw our attention to by doing this?
4. What does the house represent in scripture? Consider both positive and negative examples so that you can determine what the two houses each represent. (2 Cor. 6:16; Gal. 6:10; Matt. 23:38; Zech. 5:11)

5. Refer back to the chart of differences between Luke's account and Matthew's.
 - a. How does Luke emphasize the need for a foundation?

 - b. How does Luke emphasize that there is only one foundation we can build on? Provide a cross-reference that supports that there is only one foundation.

6. Luke says that one of the houses was built on "the earth". Look up other references to "earth" in scripture, (examples: 1 Cor. 15:47; Col. 3:2,5; Phil. 3:19; James 3:15, 5:5; Rev. 11:10). What does it mean to build a house on the earth?

7. (Optional) In Revelation 13:8, 13:13, 13:14, and 14:6 the exact Greek phrase "upon the earth" is found, and these passages interestingly refer to those who " dwell upon the earth". Who are these passages referring to, and how would you draw a link between them and this parable?

8. How does Luke say the foundation of rock is obtained? Link this idea back to the previous 2 questions and see if you can see the significance and relation between the two foundations.

9. This rock foundation is defined in a number of places in scripture (Eph. 2:18-22; 1 Cor. 3:10-15; Heb. 6:1-2; Acts 8:12; Acts 2:42; Matt. 16:16-18). After looking at each of the verses listed, in your own words briefly define what the foundation of the house is referring to.

14. When under the stormy winds of life, and ultimately the judgment to come, we are told the house built on the foundation of rock could not be shaken. Find examples in scripture where we are exhorted not to be shaken and note how it is linked to the foundation.

15. The Lord describes the storm as being made up of wind, rain, floods, beating waves, etc. (Luke 6:48-49) What is this ultimately referring to?

16. The Lord says that the one who builds his house without a foundation will face great ruin and will immediately fall (v49). When specifically will this take place...
 - a. For individuals who knew the Lord's way, but rejected it?

 - b. For those who don't know any better and are part of the house of apostasy?

17. Some Christians believe that all one must do to be saved is to be a good person (i.e. doing the fruit of the spirit) and that it doesn't matter what you believe. How does this parable refute this belief?

18. Summarize some key lessons / principles we can learn from this parable.

The Sower ~ Luke 8:4-15

The Parable of the Sower is very much focused on the foundations of the truth – and in turn asks us to examine our foundations. In it, there is a call to all those who hear the Word of God to respond; to those who respond, to examine themselves to see whether they are bearing fruit; to those who know the word, to sow the word; and to those who have sowed the word, to tend to the produce of that word. Very much, all these things, (from the message that we sow, to the reaction there is to it), depends upon the foundations that are laid, and that the seed falls on.

The Sower

1. The following questions deal with “the sower” himself and the seed he is sowing.
 - a. Who does “the sower” represent?

 - b. Luke tells us that the seed is “his seed” (i.e. the sower's seed). This is a phrase only found in Luke's gospel, in regards to this parable. In what way must the seed be personal to the sower?

 - c. What lessons can we learn from this? (i.e. how can we make the message we are sowing our own personal message – without taking away from the fact that indeed it is God's message?)

 - d. The sower sows seed across his whole field, on all types of soil. What can we learn from this?

The Seed

2. The following questions concern the seed that is being sown.
 - a. Look at Luke 8:11, Matthew 13:19, and Matthew 24:14. In your own words describe what the seed being sown represents.



- b. How is a seed a very apt and effective symbol for what it represents?

 - c. 1 Peter 1:23 & James 3:17-18 (in translations other than the KJV) use the figure of the seed. Note the characteristics of it from these passages.

 - d. The Seed is one – just as the gospel message, although made up of many aspects, is still one. Why might it be important for sowers of the word to recognize that the seed they are sowing is a single seed, especially in light of the teaching that some people hold that only certain aspects of the truth are important, and others are not?
3. What do the four types of people represented by the four types of ground all have in common with each other?

The Pathway (Luke 8:5,12)

- 4. There are three negative influences which prevent the Word from taking root in these people. The first is that the pathway itself is solid ground and can't receive the seed into it.
 - a. A pathway is not natural, but is formed over time through the constant treading on it by individuals. Likewise, people are not born with a disinterest in the truth – how is that formed? (i.e. how does their heart become hardened?)

 - b. Provide two examples in scripture of people who's hearts were hardened to the things of the truth:

- c. Knowing that the various grounds/soils represent the heart of an individual (Luke 8:12), what type of heart or individual would you say the pathway represents?
-
5. The second influence is that the seed is “trodden down”
 - a. “Trodden down” is a phrase used four times in the New Testament, three of them implying rudeness and insult, (Matt. 5:13; 7:6; *Luke 12:1*; 2 Peter 2:2). What sort of negative influence is this “treading down” referring to?

 - b. Matthew and Mark do not mention this influence in their gospels, yet Luke does. Given that Luke is a physician, and not just of the physically sick, but also of the spiritually sick, why do you think he specifically makes mention of this influence?
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6. The third influence is that of the seed being devoured by the fowls of the air.
 - a. From verse 12, as well as from Matthew and Mark’s accounts, what are the fowls said to represent, and who are these figures symbolic of? (2 Thess. 2:9)

 - b. When do these “fowls of the air” come – before or after a person has come to accept and believe the truth, and what effect do they have on this individual?

 - c. Why do people so keenly accept their message and not the truth? (2 Tim. 4:3-4)

7. Given what we know about people of the wayside...
 - a. Often, people new to the truth are perplexed at how few the number of people are that actually know and accept the truth. Should we expect a lot of response to the message we bring, especially in light of the fact that we are living in the last days? (2 Tim. 3:1-8)

 - b. Based on this aspect of the parable, as parents, why is it so important to bring up a child in the love and admonition of the truth and to remove them as best we can from the influences of the world?

8. Provide an example of someone from scripture that would be a good example of the seed falling on the pathway / wayside?

The Stony / Rock Ground (Luke 8:6,13)

In this next condition, the seed falls upon stony ground. We are told that these individuals, like those on the pathway, hear the Word, but in this condition they also believe it and accept it joyfully – at least for a time.

9. If you were a sower watching the growth of the seed, would you initially be able to tell the difference between the growth of this seed and the growth of the seed in good ground? What is the implication of this in ecclesial life?

10. Luke does not mention the external influence that causes the ground to dry up. Matthew and Mark however tell us that it is the effects of the sun. Matthew and Mark say that the sun represents trials, affliction, and persecution; while Luke says that they represent temptations.
 - a. How are trials and temptations related to one another? Provide a scriptural example.

- b. The sun is absolutely vital to growth, just as trials, persecutions, and afflictions are absolutely necessary for the development of the truth in our lives (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7). Why do you think then that Luke specifically omits mention of the sun and only mentions temptations?
11. What two things does Luke say resulted from the existence of the stones / rock in these peoples heart, that prevented them from overcoming the temptations? (Luke 8:6,13)
12. What lesson is there in this for how we are to overcome trials and temptations?
13. Luke says that the result is that they “fall away”. Look up the phrase elsewhere in the New Testament. Is this a partial falling away or a complete falling away from the truth?
14. In Luke 18:18-23 we have a very good example of the seed falling on stony ground. In this example a believer comes to Christ with joy, but because of miss-conceptions about the truth, he falls away. From this it is clear that stones are false beliefs / miss-conceptions that people have about the truth which cause them to leave when they are brought to light. What was the stone or rock in this man’s heart and how did the truth offend him?
15. Stones appear in Isaiah 5:2. When are stones supposed to be removed from the ground, and what is the implication in the parable of the Sower?

16. Luke uses a different word for the stony ground – he uses the word ‘rock’ (Strong’s #4073 – “Petra”). This word is used by Luke in only one other place in his gospel – Luke 6:48, in the parable of the Two Builders. Luke seems to go out of his way here to draw out attention back to this account. What connection can we draw between these two passages?
17. What are some stony beliefs that a person may have that would prevent them from appreciating some of the principles of the truth, but allow them to appreciate enough of it so that they are able to be baptized?
18. Thinking about the garden analogy and a plant growing in these conditions, along with what Luke has told us about roots and moisture, what practical things (if any) can be done to try and help our brothers and sisters in these circumstances?

The Thorny Ground (Luke 8:7,14)

19. Luke adds three phrases in his account of the Thorny ground, which Matthew and Mark do not include. Briefly explain what each of these three phrases tells us:
- a. “Go Forth” (8:14) –

 - b. “With it” (8:7) –

 - c. “To perfection” (8:14) –

20. Luke tells us that the thorns represent the “cares, riches, and pleasures of this life”.

The Cares:

a. What does the word “cares” mean? Provide 2 other passages from Luke’s gospel where cares of this world are warned about and explain the warning in each.

b. What exhortation does Peter give in 1 Peter 5:7?

c. Explain how the cares of this world are a thorn in the life of a believer.

The Riches:

d. Where else in the gospel of Luke is warning given about riches / wealth?

e. Sodom was condemned for her riches in Ezekiel 16:49. After considering this passage, and the surrounding verses, what sort of mindset do riches produce that we should be aware of?

f. What exhortation does Paul give in 1 Timothy 6:17-19 concerning riches?

g. In 1 Tim. 6:17, Paul specifically mentions “uncertain riches” which people put their trust in. In our day this very well describes such activities as the stock market, lotteries, gambling, pools, etc. How might activities such as these be a thorn in the life of a believer?

NOTE: Riches will be covered to a fuller extent under the third theme of materialism.

22. Identify some cares, riches, and pleasures that are thorns in your life
23. If a weed is allowed to grow too far, what effect would it have on the good seed both above ground and below ground? Is it possible to even pull the weeds roots out of the ground without damaging the good seed? (See Matt. 13:29). In your answer, comment on the applications of this to the thorns in your life, and to how and when they should be dealt with.
24. The effect of these things causes the believers fruit not to develop to perfection (Luke 8:14). What does John the Baptist say will happen to everyone who does not bring forth fruit to perfection? (Luke 3:9)

The Good Ground (Luke 8:8,15)

25. Contrast the good ground with the other types of ground.
- a. What specific similarities exist between them, or between some of them?

 - b. What specific differences exist between them, or between some of them?
26. The Word of God is received in an honest and good heart.
- a. What does the word “honest” (Strong’s #2570) mean and how is it applied practically in the life of a believer? (consider how it is used in Luke 3:9 and 6:43).

30. Both Matthew and Mark remark that there are some believers that “bring forth thirtyfold, some sixty, and some one hundredfold”. Luke does not - he simply mentions that the faithful “bring forth one hundredfold”. Come up with a couple of good reasons why Luke may record it this way? - What point might he be trying to emphasize, and what exhortation can we take from Luke?

31. (Advanced question) In Genesis 26:12, Isaac sows a field and reaps an hundredfold. It just might be possible that Luke only mentions an hundredfold in order to draw our minds back to this particular account. Read Genesis 26:1-6, 12-13 and see if you can come up with what lessons might be here in this event that relate to the bringing forth of fruit.

Theme 2 – The Atonement & Its Application

The Good Samaritan, The Pharisee & The Publican, The Two Debtors

Our understanding of the atonement has been, and continues to be, one of the defining doctrines of our community, as it is a subject that has been completely miss-construed and miss-understood by the large majority of Christendom. And yet, as we know, it is one of the fundamental elements of the foundation principles of our faith. A correct understanding of this subject is vital for salvation. And as we saw in our last section, the things which we believe are not simply to be academic points of knowledge, but are doctrines which must be translated into action – so that the things which we believe are reflected within our lives. The doctrine of the atonement is no exception to this, and the parables which we will consider in this section will teach us not only about what Christ has done for us in his sacrifice, but will teach us about how we should respond in turn to that great act of love that has been shown towards us.

As we will see, love is one of the defining features of the atonement. It began with an act of love on God’s part – the initiative towards reconciliation was God’s, and love was the motivating factor. And it demands that we show love in turn, not just to God and Christ, but to all our brethren and to creation as a whole. John instructs us, “beloved, if God so loved us, we ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11).

The two parables which we will consider in this section are The Good Samaritan, and The Pharisee & The Publican. The first of these provides us with a beautiful picture of man’s complete and utter need for Christ, of what he has done for us, and teaches us about what our response should be in turn. The Pharisee and the Publican will teach us of what our mindset should be both in worship and daily life in the realization of the great need we are in. For those who wish to do further study in this section, additional questions on the parable of The Two Debtors will be available online, and this parable not only reminds us of our need for repentance, but also considers what our attitude should be toward repentant sinners.

Each of these three parables was given by Christ in response to an individual who believed in justification by the works of the law, and who needed to understand that there was nothing that a man can do to earn salvation, for it is a gift of God. It is only through belief in the salvation of God - a belief seen in action, and a humble trust in His mercy, that a man can truly look forward to a place in that glorious Kingdom to come.

“It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD” ~ Lam. 3:26.



We have seen thus far that the lawyer was in need of salvation and that the only one who could provide it to him was Christ. We are now going to relate this whole parable to mankind's need in general for salvation and the salvation which is found only in Christ.

3. The parable begins, “and a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho...”
 - a. What would the words “go down” seem to indicate on a spiritual level? Provide at least one other example of this phrase being used in this way.

 - b. When did mankind “go down”?

 - c. The man leaves behind him the city of Jerusalem. Thinking about all that Jerusalem stands for and represents (especially in Rev. 22:2), when did mankind figuratively leave “Jerusalem”?

 - d. Knowing that Christ (the Samaritan) traveled the same road as everyone else in the parable, what does the path that this man walks down represent?

 - e. (Optional) We considered the path in the parable of the Sower. Can you think of any links / similarities between them that would enhance our understanding of this parable?

4. The man falls among thieves which strip him of his garments, wound him, and leave him as good as dead. If the man is representative of mankind, and Christ is the Samaritan, then who / what do the thieves represent?

5. From Revelation 19:8 and 16:15, what do garments / raiment represent in scripture?

9. Love, mercy, and compassion are the three characteristics that drove this Samaritan to action. (Luke 10:27, 33, 37)
 - a. Look up the word “compassion” in Strong’s along with other references using the same word and briefly describe what it means to have compassion on someone?

 - b. Give two other examples of this compassion in the Gospel of Luke:

 - c. How does Christ have compassion on us? (Heb. 4:15)

 - d. How has God shown mercy towards us? (Eph. 2:3-7; Titus 3:4-7)

10. List seven things that the Samaritan does to help the man in need:

11. Refer back to question 10 and pick four things from the list of seven, and state how Christ did them for mankind. Provide scriptural references for two of them. (Hint: See Psalm 103)

12. Consider the use of the oil and wine:

a. Why would he use oil and wine on his wounds?

b. What does oil and wine represent in scripture?

c. How does Christ heal us with oil and wine?

13. Explain how the inn the man is brought to is a good picture of the ecclesia? Note any lessons for ecclesial life we can take from this analogy.

We can see from verse 36 that the certain man's neighbour in the parable was the good Samaritan. The lawyer had asked Christ, "who is my neighbour?" From the parable we learn that Christ was his neighbour. We've also seen that mankind's neighbour is Christ. The key principle that both the lawyer and all mankind first had to recognize though is that we are all in need of salvation. It is only after receiving of the love, mercy, and compassion of Christ that we are given the command "go and do thou likewise".

14. Read 1 John 4:9-11, 21.

a. What is John's primary reason for why we should love our neighbour?

b. How does John link together our love for God and our love for our neighbour? (v21)

15. Consider the love we are to show towards those outside the faith (i.e. consider the man on the road now as being the people in the world around us).
- a. Are we responsible for manifesting God and Christ's love just to those within the ecclesia or to those in the world around us as well? (Gal. 6:10)

 - b. Provide two ways in which God manifests His love towards everyone in the world? (Romans 5:8; Matthew 5:43-48)

 - c. Ultimately, what is the greatest way we can show love for those in the world around us (and thereby manifest what Christ has done for us)?

 - d. Sometimes in our preaching and in our dealing with people who have had very sketchy pasts, we can be like the Priest and Levite and try and keep a great distance away from them. How is this attitude towards people afflicted with sin contrasted with that of the Samaritan / Christ?
16. Consider the love we are to show towards those who have left or are leaving the household of faith and wandering back to the world (i.e. consider the man on the road now as being a brother or sister who has left the truth)
- a. In what way could we now consider these brothers and sisters as "going down" and leaving "Jerusalem" behind them?

 - b. Read 2 Peter 2:12-22. Describe how a person that falls away from the truth is stripped of his garments, wounded, and left for dead by the thieves in this world?

 - c. From 2 Peter 2:19, what is the false promise that draws people away from the truth?

- d. As we try to manifest the character of the Samaritan, what is our responsibility towards those who have left the truth?
-
17. Consider the love we are to show towards those who are within the ecclesia and are in physical need.
- a. From 1 John 3:16-18 and Matthew 25:34-40 how are we to show love towards a brother in need?

 - b. What important principle does Christ bring out in Matthew 25:40?
-
18. James 2 seems to be a commentary on this parable. Bearing in mind that our neighbour is anyone – what main ideas and principles come out of James 2 concerning the following things? Note how they are exemplified in the parable.
- a. Showing partiality

 - b. The extent to which we help a neighbour in need

 - c. Showing mercy

 - d. Faith and works

The Pharisee & The Publican ~ Luke 18: 9-14

1. Who was the parable addressed to? What was the problem Christ wished to address?

2. Note the characteristics of the Pharisee and the Publican as brought out in this parable. Who does each represent?

3. How were publicans traditionally looked upon in the nation at that time and why?

4. There are four other references to Publicans in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 3:12-13; 5:27-30; 7:28-35; 15:1-2).
 - a. How had some publicans responded to the teaching of the gospel?

 - b. What does Christ commend them for?

 - c. What did the Pharisees have issue with?

 - d. What message did Christ have for the Pharisees in these passages?

5. There are a number of other references to the Pharisees in Luke's gospel. Look them up and note how they are predominantly portrayed.

6. What part of God's teaching had the Pharisees failed to comprehend?

7. (Optional) The Pharisee prays to himself. There are other passages which speak of prayers that God will not hear. Note some of the reasons why God will not hear a person's prayer.

8. In reality were the Pharisees any different from the "sinners" they refused to associate with, including the publicans? (Provide references for each of the sins listed by the Pharisee)

9. What is God's view of those who condemn or despise another disciples' sincerity for the truth? (see Psalm 15:4 for example)

10. The Pharisee praised himself for paying his tithes and fasting.
 - a. What was the purpose of each as God intended them?

 - b. Where else in the gospels does Christ comment on these things in the Pharisees' religion?

11. The Publican would not lift up his eyes.
 - a. What man in the Old Testament is Christ most likely alluding to?

 - b. Why would this man in the OT not lift up his eyes?

 - c. Faithful men like this one would often join themselves with the people in asking God for forgiveness, even though they themselves did not participate in the transgression. What other examples are there of this in scripture, and how do they contrast the attitude of the Pharisee in this parable?

OF THE FOLLOWING 3 DETAILED QUESTIONS, ANSWER 2 OF THE 3

DETAILED QUESTION 1

The Pharisee in this parable justifies himself by noting how different he was from sinners, and by noting his careful attendance to fasting and tithing.

In the ecclesia today, we often talk about how that we are God's people and are different from the world. But are we really? Is there a danger today that we could be deceiving ourselves, like this Pharisee, into thinking that we are serving God in an acceptable manner (through our attendance at meetings, and doing Bible readings, etc) when really we may not be? What is God truly looking for in us on a daily basis?

In the space provided comment on these things as they apply to you in your life, and provide and comment upon another example of this in scripture (such as the ecclesia in Laodicea or the priests in Israel during the days of Malachi). Use extra paper if needed.

“Are there no danger signals for us in the Pharisee’s attitude? To “do” the “daily readings” from the scriptures, to attend the meetings – are these actions a means to an end, or an end in itself? Is it possible to repeat the offensiveness of the Pharisee, and like him to be blind to the fault?” ~ Bro. John Carter, Parables of the Messiah.

“Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God”

DETAILED QUESTION 2

Christ says that the Publican went away justified. Look up the word ‘justified’ as it is used elsewhere in the New Testament (especially in Romans and Galatians).

In the space provided, comment on what it means to be justified, how we are justified, justification by the Law of Moses, justification by faith and works, and comment on how the Pharisee understood justification as opposed to the Publican. Be sure to note how their understanding of justification impacted their thoughts, actions, and manner of worship.

DETAILED QUESTION 3

The contrast between the prayers of the Pharisee and Publican teach us about acceptable worship. Like Cain and Abel, both had come to bring their offerings to God, yet only one was accepted. Referencing the parable, in the space provided comment on what constitutes acceptable worship to God. How should we approach Him? With what mindset should we attend the Memorial Service? Is there a danger of our worship becoming merely an outward show? Be sure to reference such passages as 1 Samuel 15:22; Micah 6:8; and Malachi 1:6.

“A man whose eyes are open – a man who understands things as they are – has such a sense of the eternal power, greatness, and holiness of God, and the ephemerality and weakness and sinfulness of man, that his own attainments, however excellent by comparison with bad men, must always appear as nothing in his eyes. His own righteousness must appear to him as filthy rags in the light of the purity and power and correctness of the Spirit-nature.” ~ Bro. Robert Roberts, The Parables of Christ.

“Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God”

Theme 3 – Materialism

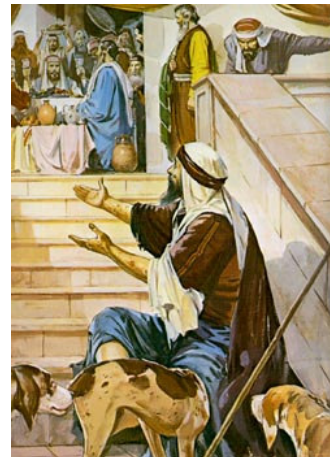
The Rich Fool, The Great Supper, The Rich Man & Lazarus

The topic of Materialism is one that needs to be looked at with a great amount of realism. Materialism may be one of the single largest threats that faces the ecclesia in these last days! Do we ever catch ourselves judging someone because of the clothing that they wear, or the amount of money that they have? This is because the world around us has nothing to fill their lives with other than competition over who can have the biggest and the best; and it is all too easy for us as Christadelphians to get wrapped up in what we have, rather than what we have become.

The world makes such light of the fact that it is driven by materialism. This is evident in the act of saying “she is such a material girl”. As Christadelphians, we too can get caught up in the obsession over material goods. If we do we may become a selfish and self-centered group of people, only looking out for our own needs, rather than thinking about the welfare of less fortunate brethren and sisters. In the Olivet prophecy Jesus warned his faithful disciples be ready for his return which could happen at any time. We are not to allow the cares of this life or the deceitfulness of riches to blind us so that we are not ready for our Lord’s return.

In this section then, we will be considering three parables that have to do with materialism – The Rich Fool, The Great Supper, and the third which will be found on the internet, The Rich Man & Lazarus. These parables will force us to consider how we spend our money, and how we spend our time. There is very little in this life that we can give to God except for our time and our energy. So if our answer to these questions is, ‘after worldly pursuits’, then hopefully we’ll be encouraged to shift our focus to the things of God.

So as we consider this topic of materialism, may God help us to carefully examine ourselves, and more importantly, to help us apply the lessons from these parables in our lives.



Materialism ~ Introductory Questions

1. Find a definition for the word ‘materialism’.
2. Would you consider yourself to be materialistic? Why or why not?
3. At what age do children comprehend the concept of mine versus yours?
4. What causes materialism?
5. Is the world consumed by materialism? Explain.
6. What affect does materialism have on your faith?
7. Do you believe that materialism is a problem of our generation? Or something that appears through all of the scriptures? (i.e. Joseph’s Brethren, Judas) Explain.
8. What is your attitude towards giving to the ecclesia? What should it be?
9. Will we be judged for how we spend our money? Provide a verse.

The Rich Fool ~ Luke 12:16-32

1. Why do you feel that Christ took the time to give a parable about the topic of Materialism? Is it probable he knew that this would become an issue for generations to come?
2. Who is Christ telling the parable to? (Luke 12:1,13)
3. What is the reason for the giving of the parable? Are we ever concerned with our inheritance or what is coming to us? (v13-15)
4. Luke 12:15 is perhaps the best verse on this problem. In your own words describe what verse 15 means and then list five places where you could use Jesus telling you this in your own life. (i.e. working late instead of attending Bible Class!)
5. Money is a very sensitive issue, especially regarding how much we give. In the Old Testament the Children of Israel were to give a tenth of their earnings (Num. 18:20-24). In the New Testament we see that our Lord Jesus Christ had virtually no natural possessions. Perhaps even larger, we see the theme that everything belongs to God. Do you give enough to the truth? Is it even yours to give? Are there more ways to give than financially?
6. What could the ground in the parable represent in our life?
7. The word for “certain” (Strong’s #5100) in verse 16, would seem to apply to anyone. What point is Christ trying to get across here?

8. a. How can we tell by careful reading in verse 16 that this man was already rich?
 - b. What insight does this give us about his attitude in regards to life and money? (Hint: look up “rich man” in a concordance and see what they say about the rich)
9. What other people were rich in the scriptures and what was their attitude towards money?
10. If you received a large amount of money do you feel your attitude would change towards family, friends, and your spiritual life?
11. Did the man in the parable have any control over whether his ground brought forth plentifully or not? What lesson or principle could we draw from this in our own circumstances of life?
12. In verses 17-19 count and Bible mark the number of times the words “I”, “he”, or “me”, are used in these verses. What is the general frame of mind that is immediately set forward about this man?
13. What other examples do we have in scripture of people who were of this character and only worried about themselves? (see Daniel 4:30-31 for one example)
14. What one thing did the man forget to do when he received this blessing? Give two examples of people in the scripture that upon receiving a blessing immediately stopped and gave thanks to God?

15. Verses 17-19 describe the reaction of this man to these circumstances. What is the problem with being so wrapped up with our accomplishments in this world? (See Luke 12:31, Heb. 13:5-6)

16. Look up the phrase in verse 17, “Bestow all my fruit” in a few different translations. What words would best describe this phrase today in our lives (seeing that most of us are not farmers)?

17. In the parable the man seems to have a very selfish and humanistic outlook. Does materialism breed selfishness?

18. Is there room in God’s Kingdom for people who can not get over their own accomplishments and pride? (Luke 12:18; Revelation 3:17-19; Proverbs 3:5-11)

19. In view of the fact that this man’s produce would be used not only for his own family, but also sold to others in order to provide money for his family...
 - a. How much time in a day do you spend wondering about money and the pursuit of having more? (Building bigger barns in our minds)

 - b. In verse 19 this man seems to be very happy. Are we being fooled into the idea that money can bring happiness?

20. Verses 18-19 show a large amount of self-trust and self-worth that this man had. Psalm 62:10-11 is an excellent verse on how we should act when we are blessed with riches. Can you find more verses along these lines and in putting our trust in God? (Hint: Look at cross-references and The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge. A good example is that of Abraham.)

21. This man “laid up his goods for many years”. Is it wrong to plan for retirement? What is the Godly principle? Please provide verses from scripture. (Consider everything in moderation)
22. Define the word ‘rich’ in under 10 words. The word rich is used all through scripture. Please look up Colossians 3:16. Can you think of any more verses related to spiritual riches?
23. In verse 19 the man “takes his ease”. Look up Ecclesiastes 11:9. What are your thoughts on taking it easy and not working? What can it cause to happen in our spiritual lives? Please provide verses to back up your view.
24. In verse 19 we see the phrase, “eat, drink, and be merry”. Where else in the scriptures does this phrase appear? Note whether it is in a good context or bad. (See Proverbs 31:4-7) What can we learn from this?
25. In Luke 17:28 Christ describes the activities of Sodom. Note how each of them was apparent in the life of the man in the parable.
26. In verse 20 we see the phrase, “thou fool”. This phrase is also used throughout scripture. Look at Proverbs 28:26, and 29:11. What is foolishness? Find verses to support your answer.
27. What does the phrase “this night thy soul shall be required of thee” mean?

28. This man thought that he was in control of his life until God required it! Do we remember that it is God's will that will be played out in our life, especially when it comes to our financial situation and success? (See James 1:10-11 & 4:14, and provide other verses on God's will.)
29. Do we lay aside our spiritual life because of schooling or work, like this man did for riches in verse 21? If we do, what affect will this have on our spiritual life?
30. Look up the word "required" in Strong's (#523). Have you thought about the fact that God will only demand back what is already his? What impact should there be on us knowing that we are God's and everything in our life as well?
31. "Whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" Do we consider what would happen to our worldly possessions upon death? Whose are these things anyways? (See Psalm 50:10-12).
32. In verse 21, how would you describe "laying up treasure for yourself" in your life?
33. What does it mean to be "rich toward God"?
34. Consider where the boundary is between "laying up treasure" and "being rich toward God" through looking at the following verses. Write a sentence beside each describing what they tell us about their relationship:
- a. 1 Timothy 6:17-19

 - b. James 2:5

 - c. Job 1:3; 42:12

d. 1 Kings 10:14-29; 11:1-11

e. Genesis 24:35

35. In Luke 12:22-23, why do you think it says that Christ starts speaking to his disciples?

36. Is it possible for us to take no thought for our life today? Explain. (See Phil. 4:6)

37. How does verse 23 apply to today? Put it in your words. (See Deut. 8:11-18)

38. What is the major theme from verses 24-28?

39. The ravens, the lilies, and the grass are mentioned in these verses. What is mentioned about each, and what lessons are we taught from each for today?

Example	What Does God Do For Them?	What Does God Do For Us?
Ravens (12:24)		
Lilies (12:27)		
Grass of Field (12:28)		

40. The Raven was an unclean animal. Where else in scripture are ravens mentioned? What spiritual lessons do we find with ravens?

41. Luke 12:25-26 – Do we concern ourselves with things that are out of our control? Why?

The Great Supper ~ Luke 14:15-24

1. Where does this parable take place? (see 14:1)
2. What does it mean “blessed is he that shall eat bread in the Kingdom of God” (v15)?
3. Is this parable speaking about the Kingdom age because of what is said in verse 15?
4. Who is the “certain man” spoken of in verse 16, and in what other parable does he show up representing the same?
5. What is the Great Supper mentioned in this verse? Where else is it mentioned in scripture?
6. This parable as recorded in Luke seems to be applying to the Kingdom Age, whereas the account of this parable in Matthew’s Gospel (Matt. 22:2-14) seems to be speaking about the nation of Israel. What is your view of this? In view of the other changes we have already seen that Luke has made in his gospel (in the Sower and Two Builders parables), why might this change in application be made by Luke?
7. Who are the many that are bade in v16?

8. Verse 16 seems to be referring to the judgment. Beside each of the following verses to do with the judgment, write down what principles we can draw from them which are applicable to today:
 - a. Hebrews 10:26-27

 - b. Revelation 14:7

 - c. 1 Peter 4:17-18

 - d. 1 Timothy 5:2

9. Who are “the servants” that are referred to in verse 17? Provide verses to support your answer.

10. What is the “supper time” that is referred to in this verse?

11. Have you been bidden to this same supper? Why or why not?

12. This verse can be an obvious link to us being taken for the Kingdom, and it speaks of things being made ready. What things do we have now that need to be made ready before we can be taken to judgment? Please provide verses.

13. How many times does the word “I” appear in verses 18-20? (You may want to consider underlining these occurrences in your Bible) and why is “I” such a good word to use in reference to Materialistic ways in our life?

14. It is very interesting to consider that both this parable and that in Luke 12 deal with the word “I”. Do we sometimes get carried away with talking about “I”?

15. The word “all” in verse 17 seems to imply that there are very few, if any, awaiting the great supper – the Lord’s Return.
- a. Do you feel that materialism is having an impact on the truth, and especially upon our anticipation of Christ’s return? Ephesians 1:17-20

 - b. Does materialism force us to be more involved with the world?
16. Consider the first excuse in verse 18...
- a. Do you feel that “the piece of ground” represents actual property or something else?

 - b. Would you have a problem leaving your land, houses, or possessions when our Lord Jesus Christ returns? Philippians 4:19

 - c. List two or three examples of people that get into trouble with real estate in scripture and what we can learn from their mistakes.

 - d. Should we own a house or property as Christadelphians today? Provide verses for your answer.

 - e. We need to remember that when we are taken to judgment it will not only be our things that we will be forced to leave behind, but our activities as well. List five things that you would not be able to finish in this life if you were taken right now. In comparison to the Kingdom, do these things seem as important as we might make them?

 - f. We see an interesting saying at the end of the verse: “I pray thee, have me excused”. It was not the master that drove them away from the supper, but rather the man himself. What does this mean for us today?

17. Consider the second excuse in verse 19...

- a. Not many of us would have problems with wanting to buy livestock today! So what would be the equivalent in our life?

- b. Livestock for a farmer was his source of income. Do we have problems with keeping work at work, and school at school, or do we seem to get carried away with chasing these pursuits?

- c. Write a paragraph or two about the challenges of leaving work or an excessive amount of schooling in order to concentrate on the truth, and making the truth as much of a priority as the above two things. (Prepare to discuss this in your discussion groups).

d. The following seven verses are about money and income. Decide whether you think that the Bible is positive on the subject or negative, and then what we can learn from each.

Verses	Positive / Negative	What We Can Learn
Luke 8:14		
Eccl. 5:13-14		
Luke 19:15-28		
John 2:14		
1Tim. 6:7-11		
James 5:1-5		
Prov. 30:8-9		

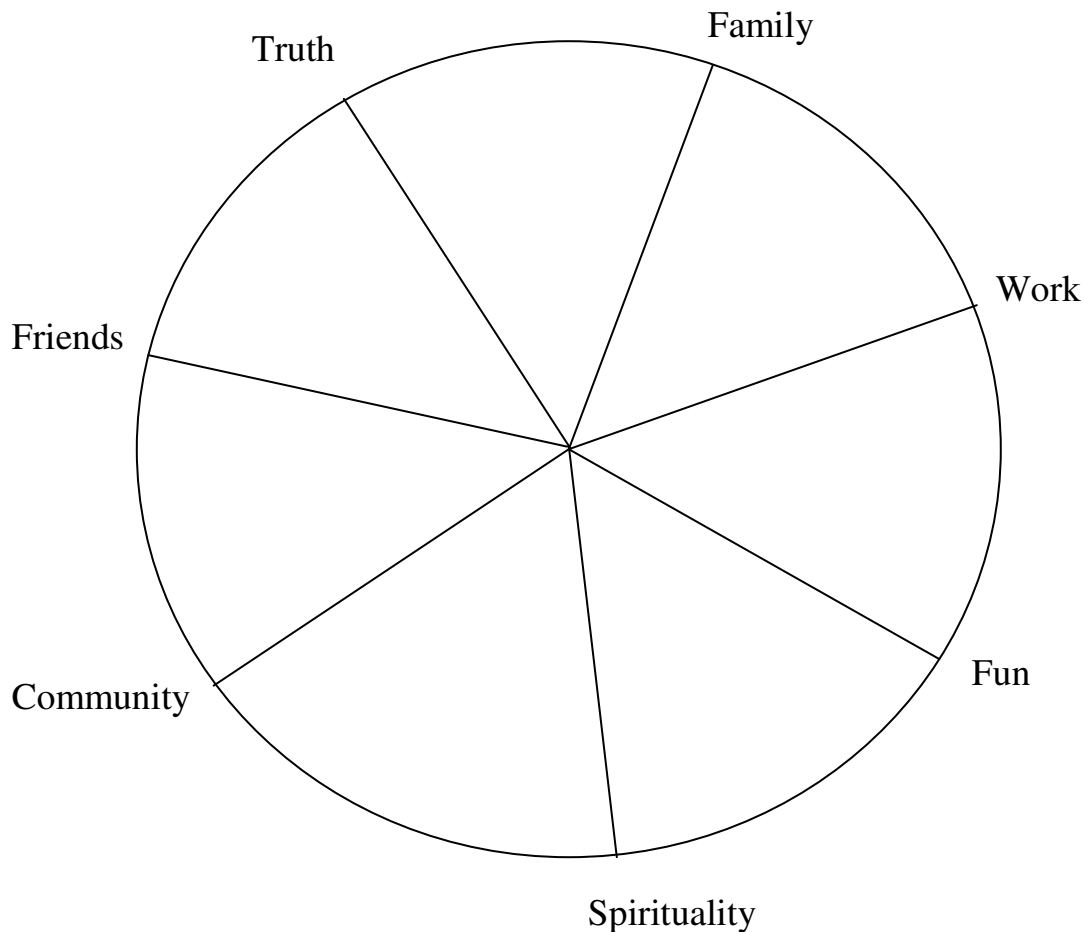
e. What do you feel the Bible is telling us about money and our pursuit of it?

Materialism ~ Concluding Questions & Activities

1. Write a one page summary describing all the forms of materialism, how they can affect our lives both naturally and spiritually. Include areas where you are having extreme difficulty and areas where you are successful, and in these areas of success, prepare to discuss them in your discussion groups. Also include in your answer why you think Christ spoke on the topic of materialism and how it's important for us today.

2. To help you decide where your focus in this life is, please complete the following activities:

The following diagram contains seven things in life that we may find important to us (some of which should be very important to us, and others not so much). On each line running from the centre, draw a mark indicating how important that thing in life is to you, with the centre being zero (indicating no importance), and the outside being 10 (indicating that it is really important to you). After putting the marks on, connect the dots. This will help you to assess where your priorities are in life.



List the following 7 things in order of importance in your life. (Remember, this is not the order they should be in, but what you feel they are in right now in your life).

- Family
- Professional Growth
- Health & Well-being
- Financial Growth
- Social Activities
- Intellectual Growth
- Spiritual Growth

3. Now that you have assessed where your priorities are in life, you are able to change them to what they need to be.

To conclude this section, look through the three parables and pull out the key verses that you feel are helpful to remember in overcoming materialism. You may find several, so combine them together to provide yourself with a powerful exhortation. Be prepared to share the ones you find most helpful with your discussion group. (You may include verses that deal with this topic that are not found in these parables if you wish).

Theme 4 – The Parables of the Lost

The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Lost Sons

At one time or another, we were all lost sheep. We “were dead in trespasses and sins... fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ”, (Eph. 2:1-5). Being baptized into Christ, we have been welcomed into his fold. The good shepherd, who gave his life for his sheep, says, “I know my sheep, and are known of mine”, (Jn. 10:11,14).

But although we have been welcomed into his fold, the road to the Kingdom is not always easy, and sadly there are times when people we may know and love, just stop coming to the meeting. Perhaps they’ve just lost interest, or perhaps they feel as if they’ve been offended or let down in some way. Some, like the little lost sheep, just innocently stray from the path of righteousness, and find themselves caught up in the wilderness of this life, desperately in need of a shepherd to guide them back. There are others though, that blatantly leave in order to pursue after the riches of this world, and thereby put themselves in a position where “it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness”, (2 Pet. 2:21).

It is also true though, that just as some leave the household of faith, and are thereby lost without, there are others who are lost within the house. They may still faithfully attend ecclesial functions, and they may look like everything is fine, but deep down the gospel message has failed to take root, and like the seed that is sown among the thorns, the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world prevent any fruit being brought to perfection.

Whatever the circumstances are, these three parables not only emphasize the very sad position these individuals are in, but provide exhortation for us as well. Like the shepherd who recognized that just one of his 100 sheep had gone astray, we too must be that attentive to recognize when one of our brethren have gone missing; And just as he left the 99 behind to go in search of the one, so we too must show that amount of diligence in seeking our brethren.

May we each be moved by the message in these three parables to pray without ceasing for those of our friends, family, and loved ones, who have gone astray; and that our efforts to restore them to life may prove to be fruitful, before it becomes too late.



The Parables of the Lost ~ Luke 15:1-32

1. After reading the three parables contained in Luke 15, comment on whether you feel that these three parables should be considered as one.
2. What might be a reason for the gathering of the large crowd in 15:1? (See Luke 14:21-23, 35)
3. What two groups of people is Christ addressing in chapter 15?
4. Why were the Pharisees & Scribes murmuring (v2)? (See Matt. 23:13)
5. Provide a couple of Old Testament examples of the Children of Israel murmuring? (Hint: Look up “murmured” in a concordance)
6. What might be significant about Christ eating with the Publicans & Sinners (v2)?
7. Is there anything in the record to suggest that the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin were given in response to the enticement of the Pharisees & Scribes?
8. What does it mean to be lost, and how do we become lost? (Jer. 50:6)

The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:4-7)

1. Where else in the New Testament does Christ tell a story about a lost sheep? Note the differences between that parable, and the one here in Luke's account.

2. What does Matthew's record (Matt. 18:13) say instead of "until he find it" (Luke 15:4)? How does this change in wording affect us spiritually?

3. Read Ezekiel 34, and note the verses that speak of the neglect on the part of the shepherds of Israel (i.e. the Pharisees in Christ's day, who he was addressing).

4. In a first century application of this parable...
 - a. Who might the ninety nine sheep represent in this parable? (Hint: see verse 3 & Luke 5:31)

 - b. Who might the lost sheep represent? (Hint: see verse 1 & Matt. 10:6)

5. Who do you think the friends and neighbours are representing in this story? (See Job 38:7 & Luke 2:13-14)

6. What point do you feel Christ is making in verse 7? (remember the conflict here between the Pharisees & the Publicans)

Perhaps the whole entire parable comes together around the one phrase, "that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance." What sweet irony Christ concludes with here in this parable. It can be pondered whether there is any joy in heaven over 99 just persons. The Pharisees were in need of repentance more than anyone, but because their attitude was wrong, Christ could not save what already felt was saved. Instead, Christ spent his time searching out the people who were truly looking for a change. What shepherd would leave ninety and nine to follow one, other than to show the relative worthlessness of the Pharisees!

This parable has more application than to just the Pharisees & Publicans. Today, the parable can be applied to the ecclesia, and the principles of this parable can be used in our search for our lost brothers and sisters.

7. In the ecclesia today...
 - a. Who might the ninety nine sheep represent? (John 10:1-5)

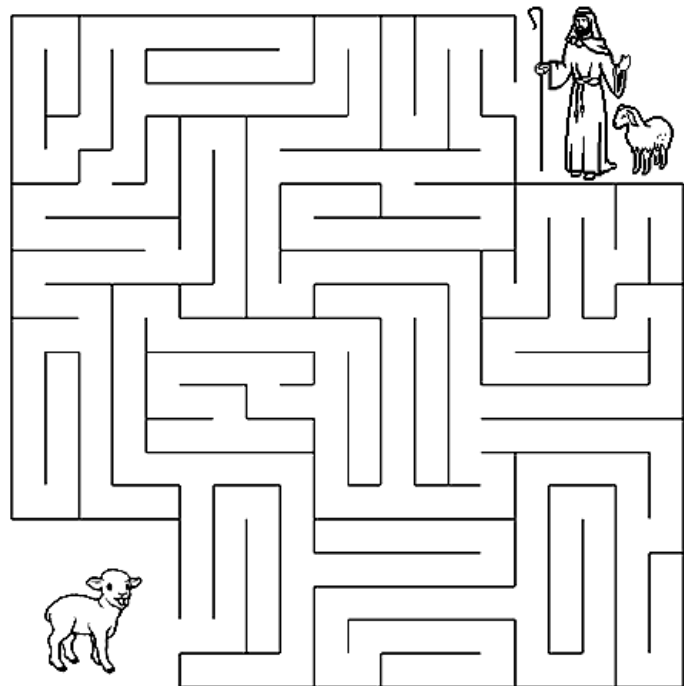
 - b. Who might the one lost sheep represent?

8. The shepherd leaves his sheep behind. What keeps the ninety nine together while he's gone?

9. What does the shepherd do when he finds the lost sheep, and what does this tell us about dealing with those individuals who have left the truth?

10. We see the attitude of the Shepherd and his friends in such phrases as: "until he find it", (v4); "layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing", (v5); "calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, 'rejoice with me'", (v6). Do you feel that this attitude is applied today within our ecclesias when someone strays from the truth?

11. In 1 Peter 2:25, we all seem to be likened to sheep that have gone astray. What does Peter tell us about ourselves?



The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)

1. Who do you think the woman represents in this parable?

2. Where else has a house been used in the parables in Luke's gospel, and what has it been used to represent?

3. Why does Christ give another parable about something being lost, right after he's just given one about a lost sheep? What might the difference be? (Hint: Consider carefully the fact that the sheep is lost outside, while the coin is lost inside!) What lesson(s) can we take from this?

4. What exactly were these coins in verse 8? (See margin, and Ezek. 30:12-15)

5. Were these coins still in common use at the time of Christ? If they were not, then give a possible explanation as to what they were, and why they were so important to the woman.

6. What might "lighting the candle" (v8) represent?

7. No doubt sweeping the house is the best way to find something or somebody that is lost. However, in the process of sweeping, a lot of dust is created. What does this illustration tell us about searching out people that are lost inside the ecclesia?

8. The coin in the parable would no doubt have had the King's image and superscription on it (Luke 20:24). What comparison does that have to someone being lost within the ecclesia?

9. With careful reading we see a difference between the first parable and the second. In the first, the shepherd "finds his sheep which was lost" (v6). In the second, the woman says, "I have found the piece, which I had lost" (v9). What does this perhaps teach us about where the fault can lay when brothers and sisters either leave the truth, or are lost within the truth?

10. What type of ground in the parable of the sower is this person's heart, who is represented by the lost coin?

11. Both the parables of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin, speak of great joy in the presence of the angels over one sinner who repents (v7, 10). Seeing that finding our lost brothers and sisters is so important, make a point-form list of ideas that may help bring brothers and sisters back into the fold / house?



The Lost Sons (Luke 15:11-32)

1. After reading this parable, what overall lesson(s) do you gather from it?
2. Note that the first parable of the lost sheep has 1/100 lost, the lost coin has 1/10 lost, and the lost son(s) has 1/2 lost. What does this show us about each parable?
3. Like with the parable of the Lost Sheep, the different characters in this parable may be seen to represent different groups of people, depending on who it is being addressed to. The chart below highlights three groups of people it could be referring to, and in each case indicates who the younger brother would represent. Complete the chart by filling in who the older brother and father would represent in each case:

Group:	Younger Son:	Older Son:	Father:
Israel in 1 st c.	Publicans & Sinners		
The Whole Body	Gentiles		
The Ecclesia	Those who have physically left the truth		

4. Briefly describe how the Pharisees and scribes fit the characteristics of the older son, and the publicans and sinners the characteristics of the younger?
5. Briefly describe how the Jews fit the characteristics of the older son, and the Gentiles the younger? (John 10:16)
6. Describe how someone today can be lost outside the ecclesia, and how someone can be lost within the ecclesia?

7. What significance might there be in the younger son asking for his inheritance?

8. What is the inheritance that was due to the younger son, and when should he have received it?
(Gen. 25:5-6; Deut. 21:17)

9. How would the whole family have been affected by this son's demand for his inheritance? What is the lesson?

10. The father gives him it willingly, which seems very strange. What's significant about this?
(Rom. 1:21-24)

11. What do the words "took his journey" (v13) emphasize?

12. What do you think is signified in the son journeying into a "far country" (v13)?

13. Can you find any examples where the words "far away" can mean being far away from God?
(Eph. 2:16-17)

14. The word "riotous living" is an interesting word. It is used in Prov. 28:7 and 7:11. What do these passages tell us about the way he was living his life?

15. Famine seems to play a role in the outcome. Can you think of another place where a famine has caused a person to come back to God? (Gen. 41:57)
16. Amos 8:11 speaks of a famine in the land. Look up the passage and see if there is any parallel to this time in...
- a. Christ's Day:
 - b. Our day:
17. Should natural circumstances or disasters make us think of God?
18. God has worked with other people through scripture by natural events to show them the right way. List a few.
19. Would this son's job of feeding pigs and lack of regard from friends have played a part in his change of life?
20. Do you find that we can get carried away and lost from the truth without realizing it, until something shocking happens in our life?
21. Try to think of a time(s) in your life where, like the prodigal son, you have been lost. What brought you back to the truth?
22. What does this tell us about the high / good life? (Prov. 11:4, 28; 22:16)

23. When this son had money, and was the life of the party (so to speak), he had lots of friends. Is there any difference today?

24. What does it mean to come to “himself”? (See a modern version)

25. There is no mention of any hardship in the record for the son to travel back to his father, only the action to begin. Look up the meaning of the phrase “he arose”, and where else it is used, and explain why it is so fitting here?

26. Verses 17-19 provide the younger son’s confession. The Bible teaches us that acknowledgement, repentance, and change should occur. How are these seen in this story?

	Verse	Quote
Acknowledgment:		
Repentance:		
Change:		

27. Can you find a verse(s) where we have to have these same steps in our lives to come to God? (Hint: Look up some of the key words, such as “confess” or “repent”)

28. Why was the Father looking for his son that day (v20)? (Think of God’s compassion)

29. What does this teach us about the boundaries of God’s forgiveness? (Ps. 103:8-13; 1 John 1:7,9)

30. What part of the confession did the son not get a chance to explain to his Father?

31. What significance is there in the Father’s gesture of the best robe, ring on his finger, fatted calf, etc.?

32. Can you think of any other gesture in scripture that would be the equivalent of our Father's forgiveness?

33. What can we learn from this?

34. Is there ever a point where we can be too lost from following God that we can not return?

35. What is the significance in verse 24, that the son was dead, when indeed he was still literally alive? Comment on what we can learn from this. (2 Pet. 3:18-22; Eph. 2:1)

36. Why was the eldest son so upset?

37. What do we learn about the eldest son by his actions?

38. "This thy son" (v30). He had so much hatred towards his brother, he could not call him brother. Many times we have people leave the truth because of this kind of heat between them. How can we constantly remember that these are our brethren, and that we need to hold them dear no matter what?

39. Would you say that the eldest son was withholding fellowship from his brother, who his father had forgiven?

40. Under what circumstances, if any, should we jeopardize our fellowship with our Father, and with our brothers and sisters? Provide a verse.
41. Where was the eldest brother's heart really at?
42. Can we become self-righteous because the path that we have taken to the Kingdom may have been a little straighter than someone else who was lost and returned to God? Explain.
43. Can this self-righteousness, as seen in the older brother, hold us out of the Kingdom?
44. This parable speaks about two sons and their distinct personalities. Both are lost – one away from home, and one at home. Can this happen to us in the meeting?
45. Is there anyone in the ecclesia, who does not have a bit of both personalities in their lives?
46. "Son, you are ever with me" (v31). Write down two passages that show that God cares for us and is always there for us.
47. What should our attitude be towards brothers and sisters that are lost and are returning, and as lost brothers or sisters coming back? (Gal. 6:1; 2 Cor. 2:6-8)

Note: This theme is also covered in the parable of the Two Debtor's questions, available online.

48. “He was lost and is found” (v32). In the other two parables, the shepherd and the woman searched for what was lost. Do you think that this phrase infers that the father searched for his son? Why or why not. Draw spiritual principles from your answer.
49. This parable seems to have its roots in the Old Testament, such as Hos. 7:8-10 or Gen. 38. Can you think of any other links, and how these passages might relate to the two sons?
50. The parable finishes without an ending. What do you think Christ was saying to the people he was addressing the parable to?
51. Write an essay to describe and summarize what you have learned from all three parables on being lost. Try to tell how an application of these in your everyday life is essential. (Use extra paper if necessary)



Theme 5 – The End of an Age

The Husbandmen in the Vineyard, The Fig Tree, The Pounds

In the days of Noah, “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually,” (Gen. 6:5). Man had corrupted his way upon the earth, and the earth was filled with violence. The ecclesia of Noah’s day was not immune from this corruption, but they too had lapsed into a sad state of apathy and acceptance of evil, so that only Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. Judgment was thus inevitable. It was pronounced, and it came to pass. And in the space of just 40 days, the antediluvian age came to an end.

Many years later, in the days of our Lord’s ministry, another age was now drawing to a close. The nation of Israel, which had already been removed once and subsequently been restored, had once again lost their spiritual perspective, resulting in an abundance of wickedness in God’s land, including a great corruption among those who held the responsibility of shepherding God’s people. So blind were they to God’s truth, that they couldn’t even recognize the promised Messiah, even with all the signs and wonders he had performed in their midst. And thus, once again judgment was pronounced, and 40 years later it came, thereby bringing an end to the Mosaic Age, with all its ritual and hypocrisy.

Today, none of us would doubt that we live in similar times. The evil in the world about us is ever increasing, and little by little it is working its way into the ecclesia, just as it did in times past. A sense of apathy and an acceptance of things, which to believers of generations past would have been unthinkable, is now slowly coming over the brotherhood. And so today we stand at the end of another age, the gentile age, and judgment both for the household and for the world at large is almost a reality. And thus, there is a great urgency to be preparing ourselves for that time, by heeding the signs that are about us indicating that it is near, and putting into practice the lessons from the word, such as we have been considering in this study of the parables.

The three parables which will be considered in this final section all have to do with the end of an age and with coming judgment. The parable of the Husbandmen in the vineyard takes us back to the days of Christ, and considers the need for judgment at that time. The parable of the Fig Tree also speaks of these things, but then catapults our minds forward, bringing us to consider the miraculous signs in our own days which profess that Christ’s coming is indeed nigh. Finally, for those who wish to do further study, the parable of the pounds will be available on the internet, which speaks to us about that coming judgment, of our attitude towards it, of what we must be doing to be preparing ourselves for it, and how the world at large will respond to it. In all of this we will seek to draw forth lessons that we can apply in our lives as we await that glorious day of Israel’s redemption.

**The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off
the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.**

~ Romans 13:12 ~

The Husbandmen in the Vineyard ~ Luke 20:9-18

1. Luke 20:1-2 provide the background to this parable. Who is Christ addressing and what are they challenging him with?
2. Using the cross-references in your Bible, or a resource like The Treasury of Scripture Knowledge, find three passages in the Old Testament which Christ pulls the ideas in this parable from.
3. Do some brief research on Vineyards in scripture. Using both a Bible Dictionary or Encyclopedia, as well as other scriptures (especially Isaiah 5), find out how a person would initially make a vineyard, for what purpose a vineyard was made, what the duties of husbandmen were in the vineyard, and what the vineyard represents in scripture.



4. Four characters (or groups of characters) are mentioned in this parable. In the space provided list everything that the parable says about these people, including what they do, how they respond, their notable characteristics, etc.
 In the right column, note who each of these characters represents. Cross-references have been provided that show matching characteristics. You can add more if you wish.

Key Characteristics	Represent
The Certain Man	(Isa. 5; Rom. 5:8; 1 Jn. 4:9-10; Exo. 34:6-7)
The Husbandmen	(Matt. 23:30-38)
The Servants	(2 Kin. 17:13-14; Jer. 25:3-7; Heb. 11:35-38)
The Beloved Son	(Phil. 2:5-8)

The Fig Tree ~ Luke 13:6-9 & 21:29-32

During Christ's ministry, there were three (recorded) occasions when he delivered parables on the fig tree – and together they tell a complete story. Two are stated in the record to be parables, the other is what may be called an acted parable – one not spoken in words, but rather in actions. The first is in Luke 13, the second in Matthew 21, and the third in Luke 21. We will look at each in turn.

1. Using an encyclopedia, Bible Dictionary, or some other resource, research the fig tree, and note the key characteristics pertaining to its growth and development. Specifically, be sure to note when the leaves and the figs appear, the difference between the first fruits and the latter fruits, when the first fruits ripen, and what it means when a fig tree has only leaves and no fruit. (Note: Answers to these questions will be important to our understanding of these parables).

2. Christ picks up the symbol of the fig tree from the Old Testament. Note where in the Old Testament the fig tree is used in symbol, and what it is used to represent. (Hint: Look up “fig tree” in a concordance, or look at cross-references)

3. Where else in scripture are trees used to represent nations and people?



The Cursing of the Fig Tree - Matthew 21:18-19

8. Where had Christ been the day before the fig tree was cursed, and what significant event took place there? Note when Christ had done this before, and how it demonstrated the principle of God's forbearance and ultimate judgment seen in the parable of Luke 13.

9. Based on your study of fig trees in question 1, why did Christ curse the fig tree and what was that cursing figurative of?

“This fig tree, precociously putting out its leaves, gave every promise therefore of figs: but it had none. There was profession but not practice: it was a fit symbol of the deceitful and hypocritical attitude of one with moral pretensions but of immoral ways. It illustrated a religious pretence; it was a picture of delusion and sham... the fig tree by the wayside was a symbol of the nation of Israel.” (J. Carter ~ Parables of the Messiah)

10. Hypocriticalness was a serious problem in the nation at that time. What is hypocriticalness, what did Christ have to say about it in Matthew 23, and how can it impact us?

11. Christ had called the temple “a den of thieves”. In what way were the religious leaders at that time thieves? Consider the way in which they had stolen from the people, and the way in which they were guilty of stealing directly from God, and how this may impact us today.

NOTE: We do not have space to look at it here, but for anyone wishing to do further study, you may wish to consider Zechariah chapter 5, where in the vision of the flying scroll Israel's sins under the Mosaic age were foretold, and in the vision of the flying Ephah the sin of Israel was taken away in judgment and transferred to Shinar (figurative of Babylon the Great). Today, the sin of Israel is seen in Catholicism and in her harlot daughters, making these warnings from Christ very relevant to us today. For more on this, see Bro. John Carter's book, “Prophets After the Exile”.

12. The fig tree withered in AD70. This is described in Matthew 24:15 and Luke 21:20. Do some brief research into the events at that time. Note what took place in the nation, specifically in regards to what happened to Israel as a nation, Jerusalem, the temple, and the Jewish people, and explain how God had given His people a way of escape at that time.

(Information on this time can be found on the internet, or at the end of Bro. Robert Roberts book, The Ways of Providence. For a more extensive exposition on this time, see Bro. John Thomas' book, The Last Days of Judah's Commonwealth, available online at www.christadelphianbooks.org)

13. Most of Christendom today would tell us that God's cursing of the fig tree was final, and that his purpose with the nation of Israel is over. Prove from scripture that this cannot possibly be the case, and describe how the gospel message is inseparable from Israel. (Hint: See Romans 9-11).



The Shooting Forth of the Fig Tree - Luke 21:29-32

14. Refer back to question 3. What do “all the trees” represent?

15. The fig tree and the other trees “shoot forth”. What passages in scripture use similar language and what is it symbolic of? (hint: look up “shoot forth” and other similar phrases in a concordance)

16. In what major Old Testament prophecy describing the restoration of Israel is something that has dried up (withered), returned to life? (Ezek. 37)

17. When do you think Israel “shoot forth”? (Carefully consider Ezekiel 36:8-11)

18. Luke is careful to point out that other trees shoot forth at this time as well. What other nations or powers does the Bible say will return to life at the time of the end? (Rev. 17:8; Ezek. 38:4)

19. Provide a brief summary of the events leading up to the formation of the state of Israel in modern times. Make specific mention of the events that occurred in relation to this in 1917, 1948, 1967, and other events that you may feel are relevant since that time.



20. What is the exhortation of the parable of the fig tree?

21. OPTIONAL: Some of you may wish to continue your study of this parable in considering the phrase, “this generation shall not pass away until all be fulfilled”. If so, you will need to carefully consider the following:
- What is a generation in scripture? (Note: there are differing lengths)
 - At what age was a person considered to be part of “this generation”?
 - Who does “this generation” refer to?
 - What events does “all be fulfilled” refer to? (You will need to research each of the phrases in Matthew 24:30-31 and Luke 21:27 to determine what events are being spoken of).

WRITTEN 100 YEARS IN ADVANCE

“The truth is, there are two stages in the restoration of the Jews, the first is before the battle of Armageddon; and the second, after it; but both pre-millennial. God has said, “I will save the tents of Judah first”. This is the first stage of the restoration...

...There is then a partial and primary restoration of Jews before the manifestation, which is to serve as the nucleus, or basis, of future operations in the restoration of the rest of the tribes after he has appeared in the Kingdom. The pre-advantural colonization of Palestine will be on purely political principles; and the Jewish colonists will return in unbelief of the Messiahship of Jesus, and of the truth as it is in him. They will emigrate thither as agriculturists and traders, in the hope of ultimately establishing their commonwealth, but more immediately of getting rich in silver and gold by commerce with India, and in cattle and goods by their industry at home under the efficient protection of the British power. And this their expectation will not be deceived; for, before Gogue invades their country, it is described by the prophet, as “a land of unwalled villages, whose inhabitants are at rest, and dwell safely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates; and possessed of silver and gold, cattle and goods, dwelling in the midst of the land” (Ezekiel 38:11,12,13)...

...But to what part of the world shall we look for a power whose interests will make it willing, as it is able, to plant the ensign of civilization upon the mountains of Israel? The reader will, doubtless, anticipate my reply from what has gone before. I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt. The present decisions of “statesmen” are destitute of stability. A shooting star in the political firmament is sufficient to disturb all the forces of their system; and to stultify all the theories of their political astronomy. The finger of God has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain which cannot be evaded, and which her counsellors will not only be willing, but eager, to adopt when the crisis comes upon them.”

Bro. John Thomas, Elpis Israel, (1848).

- e. What does Isa. 56:10-12 say are the characteristics of the spiritually blind?

- f. What first-century ecclesia is condemned for its blindness, and what are the things they were specifically condemned for?

- 4. The word “fall into” is the strong’s number 1706. What is the Strong’s definition for this word?

- 5. The following passages mention the danger of “falling into” various things. In each passage what are these people in danger of falling into, and therefore, what specific qualities are to be looked for in a leader?
 - a. 1 Timothy 3:6

 - b. 1 Timothy 3:7

 - c. 1 Timothy 6:9

- 6. In Heb. 10:31, what specifically does Paul exhort us to do so as not to *fall into* the hands of the living God? Tie this into the lessons learned from the parable of the two builders.

7. What specific lessons or warning come out of this verse for:
a. The religious leaders in Christ's day?

b. The common people looking to serve God in Christ's day?

c. Us today?

A Master's Relation to the Disciple (Luke 6:40)

8. Who ultimately is the master and who are the disciples referred to in this verse?

9. What relationship is the relationship between disciples and the master supposed to emulate?
(John 13:16)

10. Was this the case in Israel in Christ's day, and is it the case in the majority of churches today?

11. How has the Roman Catholic Church completely gone against this teaching? (2Thess. 2:4)

12. Look up the word 'perfect' in other versions or in Strong's. What does this word mean, and how are we to understand the phrase, "everyone that is perfect"?

13. What significant message does this verse have for the religious leaders both in Christ's day and in our day in reference to leaders ruling over their disciples? (In your answer, consider what mindset leaders must always have towards their disciples)

The Mote & The Beam (Luke 6:41-42)

14. How does Strong's define each of the following words and what does each represent?

a. Mote (2595)

b. Beam (1385)

15. Vines says that the word "beam" refers to a piece of timber that would be received at their ends into walls (thus holding up a structure).

a. How could we relate this word 'beam' to the foundational issues of the truth?

b. If this beam represents the foundational principles of the truth, how is it that they are said to be in the eye of certain people, causing them to be blind?

The Treasure of the Heart (Luke 6:45)

25. This verse mentions the heart and a treasure within the heart. In the parable of the sower what represented the heart, and what would the treasure in this parable be likened unto in the sower?

26. The emphasis is again placed on the speech of this individual. Find three passages that indicate that what we treasure in our heart being manifest in our speech?

In Summary

27. We looked previously at the parable of the two builders and saw that one house represented the members of the true ecclesia, while the other represented the churches of the apostasy. Based on what we have seen in this parable, briefly contrast the characteristics of the leaders of each?

28. Summarize the main principles / lessons that are brought out in this parable for leaders and teachers in the ecclesia today:



4. Why do you think Christ asked Simon if he could speak (v40)? Consider what he was trying to teach Simon, what spiritual principle Christ was demonstrating, and what lessons there might be in this for us.

5. Christ perceived the thoughts and mind of both Simon and the woman. On what basis did he judge them? (See Isa. 11:3-4; John 6:30; 1Sam. 16:7)

6. The parable of the two debtors teaches us several principles concerning the atonement. For each of the six characteristics, note what principle of the atonement it demonstrates, and provide a reference.
 - a. Both men are debtors

 - b. The two debtors owed differing amounts, yet they are treated the same

 - c. Both debtors are forgiven of their amounts

 - d. The creditor takes the initiative in helping the situation

 - e. The two debtors are now equal before their creditor

 - f. The debtors respond to the creditor's mercy in love

As was demonstrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, love is the natural response which we must give to the love and the mercy shown toward us by God. Love is not simply a feeling, but an action – and without the works of love, true love does not exist (1John 3:18). Our love toward God should be the prime, motivating force for serving Him, and not fear (1John 4:15-19).

7. Repentance is the basis for forgiveness.
 - a. What is Biblical repentance – a feeling or an action?

 - b. How does the woman display her repentance?

 - c. What lesson is there in this for us?

8. Once we have been baptized, are all our sins forgiven? Under what circumstances will they not be forgiven? (See Heb. 10 & 2Pet. 2)

9. In the ecclesia today, how are we to respond to repentant sinners (both those who are unbaptized, and those who have sinned once baptized)?

10. Both the apostles Paul and John speak of the need at times to withdraw fellowship from individuals (1Cor. 5 & 2John).
 - a. What are some scriptural reasons for withdrawing fellowship from an individual?

 - b. Based on what we have considered concerning repentance and forgiveness, how are we to reconcile withdrawing fellowship with showing love and forgiveness towards others?

 - c. What is the purpose or purposes of withdrawing fellowship?

 - d. On what basis should a brother or sister be restored to fellowship?

11. Christ told the woman, “thy faith hath saved thee”. In the space provided consider the relationship between faith and works in this parable. Is simply confessing a belief in Christ as your personal saviour good enough in the eyes of God? Look at what James has to say on the subject in James 2:14-26. What is the difference between justification by works of faith and justification by the works of the law?

12. Christ’s final words to the woman are “go in peace”. Peace is often mentioned in opening salutations of many of the apostles’ letters and peace is one of the natural results of the outworking of the atonement in our life. What is Biblical peace? Describe how it is obtained, and how it is worked out on various levels – producing an inner peace of mind and peace between brethren. (See Phil. 4:6-9 & Isa. 48:22)

The Rich Man & Lazarus ~ Luke 16:19-31

1. We are not specifically told anywhere that the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable. How could we prove that it is?
2. We are specifically told the rich man was clothed in purple. Using a resource such as a Bible dictionary, find out what was special about this colour clothing, and make reference to a law passed by one of the Caesar's in regards to it.
3. The rich man also wore "fine linen". Who specifically in the Old Testament wore "fine linen", and what occupation might this indicate this rich man had?
4. Verse 28 tells us that this man specifically had 5 brethren. Who was the High Priest at that time and how many brothers did he have?
5. After what event did this High Priest take direct action to put Christ to death? (John 11: 47-53)
6. What does the word "sumptuously" in verse 19 mean?
7. What class of people are depicted in the rich man?

8. By extension, Revelation 18 seems to pick up on some of the imagery presented in this parable concerning the rich man. What things are common between the following passages, and who is Rev. 18 referring to?
 - a. Luke 16:19 & Rev. 18:7:
 - b. Luke 16:23 & Rev. 18:7:
 - c. Luke 16:24 & Rev. 18:8:
 - d. Luke 16:19 & Rev. 18:12,16:
 - e. Revelation 18 refers to: _____
9. What five things are we told about Lazarus before he dies? (16: 20-21)
10. Lazarus lies in the gate of the wicked.
 - a. Who in the Old Testament sat in the gate of the wicked and how is he described in 2Pet. 2?
 - b. How might this also be playing off of Gen. 22:17?
 - c. From these two examples, what class of people does Lazarus represent?
11. What is the Strong's Definition for "full of sores" (#1669)?
12. Lazarus desired to be fed. How does this relate to the characteristics of the righteous in this dispensation? (Matt. 5:6)

13. Dogs lick Lazarus' sores. From Matthew 15:27, who do dogs represent, and what is symbolized by the dogs in this parable?

14. Is there anything good or bad specifically said about the rich man or Lazarus in verses 19-21?

15. In Christ's day, what did the people believe was the reason for illness, and what would they have thought about Lazarus? (John 9:2)

16. What connection is therefore demonstrated in this parable between belief and action?

17. Is there a way we could be like this rich man in the attitude he takes up toward Lazarus, when we see someone in need within our community, or even in the world at large?

18. What does Abraham's bosom refer to and why would Christ use this terminology?

19. Angels are specifically mentioned as being involved in taking righteous Lazarus to Abraham's bosom. What role will angels play at the time of Christ's return? (Mark 13:27, Luke 9:26, Luke 12:8-9)

20. The rich man “sees Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom,” (16:23). What Bible echo is here to another part of Christ’s teaching regarding what the wicked will see at Christ’s return?
21. In the parable of The Good Samaritan we saw how Christ put the lawyer in the position of the injured man on the road in order to teach him about his need for redemption. How does Christ employ a similar tactic here?
22. Explain how the rich man and Lazarus’ positions have now been reversed after death, compared to when they were alive? What is the scriptural principle? (1Cor. 1:27; Matt. 19:30)
23. Lazarus is specifically mentioned by name in this parable. It just may be that Christ is referring to the real Lazarus in John 11. Note the similarities between the two.
24. This parable has been used to support the doctrine of heaven-going, because Lazarus was “carried away”.
- a. What is the Strong’s definition for “Carried” (#667)?
 - b. Does the meaning give any other insight into the meaning of the verse?
 - c. How does the real story of Lazarus in John 11 directly refute the teaching of souls, heaven, and hell as presented by Christendom?
 - d. What other verses might we use as support?

- e. List some things in this parable that would conflict with the churches beliefs on heaven and hell.

 - f. What is the Strong's definition for "hell" in verse 23 (#86)?

 - g. What does hell refer to?

 - h. Do some research into the Pharisees view of heaven and hell at the time. (See Josephus). Does it match with this parable?

 - i. Why would Christ employ imagery of something he knew was false? Would this not confuse people? (See Luke 8:10)
25. Verse 24 seems to indicate that the tongue is the source of the rich man's torment, and that by cooling it, the whole body would be cooled. James 3:6 picks up on this idea by mentioning the tongue, fire, and hell. After reading the context of James 3:6 comment on the tongue in relation to the wicked, and why it might be specifically mentioned in this parable?
26. (Optional) Can you find any significance to "the tip of his finger" being dipped in water in verse 24?

27. According to verse 25, are the “good things” the rich man received in his lifetime referring to the material things he accumulated or something else? (See Matt. 6:2,5)

28. What can we learn from this illustration about what we should pursue in this life in terms of goals and dreams for ourselves?

29. Verse 26 contains the second reason Abraham could be of no help to the rich man – a great gulf was fixed. What does this teach us concerning the time of opportunity and the judgment?

30. In verses 27-28, we see a change in the man once he has no control – from a sumptuous rich man, to a man begging for mercy. This may be related to the weeping and gnashing of teeth that the wicked will experience at the judgment (Luke 13:28). What caused this change and was there any hope for him at this point? What are the lessons for us?

31. a. Why was Lazarus not sent to the rich man’s five brethren? (16:29)

b. How is a similar lesson shown in the parable of The Husbandmen in the Vineyard? (Luke 20: 9-16)

c. What is the equivalent to “Moses and the prophets” that we have today?

- d. What lessons can we take?
32. What connection can we draw between Abraham's words in verse 30 to the actual story of Lazarus in John 11?
33. In Romans 10:17, where does Paul say true faith comes from?
34. Summarize some of the overall lessons we can draw out of this parable.

6. This parable depicts Christ as the nobleman going away and then returning.
 - a. What occurs to the nobleman while he is gone?

 - b. When the nobleman received the Kingdom, he did not physically possess it at that time. When would he possess the Kingdom and who possesses it in the meantime?

 - c. How do passages such as Daniel 7: 13-14 and Phil. 2: 8-11, tie in to what is happening in this parable.

 - d. What else did Christ receive in heaven (Rev. 1:1) and how would this assist in his work?

7. A distinction is made between the citizens of the Kingdom and the servants of the King. Who do each represent?

8. The following questions concern the citizens of the Kingdom.
 - a. How do the citizens respond to the coming of the nobleman as King?

 - b. How does Psalm 2 compliment this?

 - c. In recognition that Christ will be coming, what false doctrines have been introduced by the church to further the opposition to Christ's rule?

- e. How do the servants represent us?

 - f. What are we expected and required to do with the pound given to us?

 - g. Practically, how do we make the pound grow? (2Thess 1:3)
10. Although every servant receives the same amount, some end up having more than others on judgment day.
- a. From this parable, what was the basis of acceptance into the Kingdom?

 - b. Where in the parable of the sower is the same principle evident?

 - c. OPTIONAL QUESTION: Ten servants receive pounds. How come only three are mentioned later on?
11. The following questions concern the wicked servant:
- a. Did this servant know what was required of him when he received the pound?

 - b. The word for “napkin” can also be referring to a sweat-cloth. How is it appropriate to his characteristics that he should wrap his pound up in a sweat-cloth?

- c. What kind of man is this wicked servant?
-
12. Link the idea of covering up the pound with hiding a candle under a bushel.
 - a. Why would someone cover up their “pound” or “candle”?

 - b. This man blames his master for being unreasonable. Is this a just claim?

 - c. The record says that the man “feared” his master. Is this the same fear spoken of in scripture that the righteous should have?

 - d. How should we view our masters appearing? (2 Timothy 4:8; James 1:12)

 13. There are two judgments depicted in this parable – one for the servants and one for the citizens. What do these judgments point forward to and which one comes first? (1 Pet. 4:17-18; Matt. 25:31-32)

 14. Provide 2 passages which say that the servants of Christ will be gathered together to judgment to give account for their ways:

 15. Jeremiah 17:10, Isaiah 11:2-4, and John 5:30 speak of the character of Christ and the way in which he will judge. With what mindset will he judge his servants?

16. The faithful servants are granted a place in God's Kingdom and are said to "rule" over cities. Provide two references that clearly state that we will "reign with Christ" in the Kingdom:
17. What does this parable indicate about how responsibilities will be determined in the Kingdom?
18. Christ states, "unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him."
- a. Where else in Luke is this statement made?
 - b. After what two parables is it made and do you think this is just a co-incidence?
 - c. What does the statement mean?
19. What practical lessons can we learn from this parable?

Discussion Group Topic Suggestions

The following are a list of possible discussion group topics for each day, which you may find helpful when preparing what to discuss in the group. This list is not exhaustive, and they are just suggested ideas. You or someone else in the group may have other things they want to discuss.

All the parables

- Discuss the meaning / interpretation of the parables
- Discuss practical lessons from the parable as they apply to us both on an individual and ecclesial level
- Discuss where the ideas and imagery found within the parable are found elsewhere in scripture and how they enhance our understanding of the parable
- Discuss any Old Testament events that might have served as a basis for the parable
- Look at other passages which may give practical examples or exhortations associated with the parable
- Consider how the ideas (lessons and imagery) from one parable are picked up in other parables

Theme 1 – Spiritual Foundations

The Two Builders:

- Discuss the possible reasons, significance, and lessons behind the changes Luke makes in his gospel as compared to Matthew record of the parable.
- Discuss the way in which the two houses are a good picture of the household of faith vs the house of apostasy, and the lessons we can gain
- Discuss the way in which first principles affect our actions and thinking
- Discuss ways in which the first principles can be taught in a refreshing and stimulating way within our ecclesias
- Discuss the balance between knowing the truth and putting it into practice – a problem seen in Christ’s followers

The Sower:

- Discuss the possible reasons, significance, and lessons behind the changes Luke makes in his gospel as compared to Matthew and Marks record of the sower parable.
- Look at practical scriptural examples of people who would exemplify those on the various types of ground
- Discuss ways in which our preaching to those without can be more effective, based on the things mentioned in this parable.
- Discuss what the parable has to say about those who leave the truth or are spiritually weak and how we can be a help to those individuals
- Discuss what the parable teaches us about dealing with thorns in our life
- Discuss what the parable teaches us about how we can most effectively be sown on good ground

Theme 2 – The Atonement & It's Application

The Good Samaritan:

- Discuss the way in which the attitude of the lawyer can be seen within our lives and ecclesias today and how we can deal with that attitude / mindset, including the problem of self-justification
- Discuss the challenge of seeing ourselves in need of salvation
- Discuss how the imagery of the inn is a good description of the ecclesia, and the practical lessons associated with that
- Discuss how we show love to those in the world around us. Is it appropriate to give money to charities of this world?
- Discuss the 3 spiritual qualities of love, mercy, and compassion
- Discuss ways we can manifest the characteristics of the Pharisee and Levite in ecclesias today
- Discuss what our attitude should be toward repentant sinners – both before and after baptism
- Discuss the relationship between the love of God and love of neighbour – how each are related to each other
- Discuss the impact of Christ's sacrifice on our life in a practical sense
- Discuss the inadequacy of the Law of Moses to save

The Pharisee & Publican:

- Discuss the way in which the attitude of the Pharisee can be seen within our lives and ecclesias today and how we can deal with that attitude / mindset
- Discuss the balance between faith and works
- Discuss the difference between justification by faith vs justification by works
- Discuss scriptural reasons why God will not hear prayer
- Discuss the 3 detailed questions on pages 27-29 of the workbook

Theme 3 – Materialism

The Rich Fool:

- Discuss the way in which material possessions and pursuits can impact a young persons mind and attitude towards others, the truth, and Christ's return
- Discuss the practical response we should take if we happen to be blessed with a lot of money in this life
- Discuss the balance between the time and effort placed on ecclesial life vs school/work
- Discuss the balance between trusting in God to provide for our needs, and saving money for our needs (and retirement)

The Great Supper:

- Discuss the pros and cons towards a latter-day interpretation of the parable vs a 1st c. application
- Discuss the practical applications of the three excuses as they apply to our lives
- Discuss whether it is appropriate to date and/or marry outside the truth
- Determine who the various groups of people in the parable represent and why this imagery is used to describe them

Theme 4 – The Lost

- Discuss the balance between in a 1st c. application and a present-day application of the three parables
- Discuss the mindset of the shepherd, woman, and father, and what it teaches us
- Discuss the peculiarities in the behavior of the shepherd and father and what those are meant to teach us
- Discuss the differences between the 4 different lost things/individuals, how the process of their recovery differed, and how they can help us in recovering lost brethren in the ecclesia
- Discuss what we can do practically as young people to help those that are lost and to prevent people in the ecclesia from getting lost
- Discuss how we could be lost within the house, how we can recognize that, and how we can help those in that circumstance
- Discuss how we can adopt the attitude of the younger son in ecclesial life
- Discuss the possible reasons for the differences between Matthew and Luke’s parable of the lost sheep

Theme 5 – The End of an Age

The Husbandmen in the Vineyard:

- Discuss the imagery of the vineyard (see Q3 on page 62)
- Discuss the what the parable says about God, Christ, and the Servants, and lessons we can take from those
- Discuss the sin / mindset of the husbandmen, how they are manifest today in Christendom, and how they can be seen in our life
- Discuss the meaning of Luke 20:18

The Fig Tree:

- Discuss the use of the fig tree – why it is used, and what it represents
- Discuss God’s character – what he desires from us, and the balance between His mercy / long-suffering vs judgment
- Discuss hypocriticalness and how it can be seen in us today
- Discuss the findings of the events of AD70
- Discuss how we can combat the view that God’s purpose with Israel is finished, and the promises made to her have been inherited by the church
- Discuss what the “shooting forth” of the fig tree represents
- Discuss how other trees / nations “shoot forth”
- Discuss some of the notable signs of the times and how they should affect us
- Discuss possible meanings behind “this generation shall not pass away”
- Discuss how we should go about being always ready for Christ’s Return

Conclusion

At the conclusion of the week, you may wish to wrap up the discussion group with a summary / discussion of some of the common lessons and themes that run through the parables we have been considering over the course of the week, and look at what they can teach us in regards to being ready for the return of Christ at any moment.