

The Parables of Jesus #28

“The Parables of *The Lost* in Israel” - Part 1

Throughout this study, we will look at three separate parables, which, when understood together within their first century context convey an extremely significant message. Let’s begin with Jesus’ introduction to these three parables.

Luke 15:1-3a

Now all the *tax collectors and the sinners* were coming near Him to listen to Him. Both *the Pharisees and the scribes* began to grumble, saying, “*This man receives sinners and eats with them.*” So, he told them this parable, saying....

Who was this parable primarily addressed to?
Why did Jesus tell them this parable?

Parable 1: A Lost Sheep

Luke 15:3b-7

“*What man among you, if he has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open pasture and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?*” “When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, *rejoicing.*” “And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, ‘*Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!*’” “I tell you that in the same way, *there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.*”

Parable 2: A Lost Coin

Luke 15:8-10

“*Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?*” “When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘*Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!*’” “In the same way, I tell you, *there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.*”

In your own words, summarize these parables?
How does Jesus’ introduction [Luke 15:1-3a] help to interpret the parables?

Consider the following as a possible interpretation:

“Jesus is communicating to his generation that He as Yahweh [the Father] of the Old Testament is “seeking and saving that which was lost” [Luke 19:10]. Through His gospel, Jesus is *mercifully, gracefully, and faithfully* gathering the remnant [the lost sheep of the house of Israel - Matthew 15:4] under the rule and reign of heaven. *Israel was lost, but in Christ she had been found.*”

Notice the following observations:

- Both parables concern common first century commodities - *sheep and silver coins.* Why is this significant?
- Sheep were a common Hebrew metaphor for the *children* of Israel. [Numbers 27:15-17]
- The parable of the lost sheep insinuated that the scribes and Pharisees were incompetent shepherds who were at least partially to blame for the loss of *their sheep, and therefore subject to judgment.* [Ezekiel 34:1-10]
- The combined themes of the “gathering of the lost sheep” and “rejoicing in heaven” was a common theme concerning the restoration of the remnant of Israel for the consummation of the Messianic remarriage. [Zephaniah 3:12-20, Isaiah 62:1-5,10-11]

In conclusion:

These two parables conveyed a powerful message to the Jews of the first century. By *eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners*, Jesus both Lord [God] and Christ [Messiah] had visited his people to accomplish the eschatological [last days] work of the Father; *to seek and to save the lost sheep in Israel*. Those who had heard his voice were being raised up and gathered together as the righteous remnant and the first-fruits of a New Covenant Creation. We will further develop these ideas and more, in the parable of a "*long lost son*".

Continued in part 2....