



# PARABLES AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

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*Professor Steve Walton, Trinity College, Bristol*



# 'PARABLE WORLD'

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- Strange things happen in 'parable world'
  - the rich fool Luke 12:13-21
  - the dishonest manager Luke 16:1-9
- Think of 'parable world' as like a cartoon

# WHAT IS A PARABLE?

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- At its simplest a parable is **a metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life**, arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.

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# 'THE KINGDOM OF GOD/HEAVEN IS LIKE...'

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- Not all parables about the kingdom of God (*contra* Dodd and Jeremias)
- Focus on those with explicit connection, mostly in Matthew
  - the kingdom of heaven as **God's** kingdom
  - the kingdom of heaven requires human response
    - 'entering' the kingdom

# 'THE KINGDOM OF GOD/HEAVEN IS LIKE...'

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- Matthew 13
  - vv 24-30, 36-43 sowing good seed which an enemy mixes with weeds
  - vv 31-32 mustard seed
  - v 33 yeast mixed in with flour
  - v 44 treasure hidden in a field
  - v 45 the pearl of great value
  - vv 47-48 the net which gathers a mixture of fish

# 'THE KINGDOM OF GOD/HEAVEN IS LIKE...'

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- Matt 18:22-35 the king who wants to settle accounts
- Matt 20:1-16 the landowner going to hire workers
- Matt 22:1-14 the king giving a wedding banquet for his son
- Matt 25:1-3 the ten bridesmaids waiting for the groom



# THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS PRESENT IN THE PARABLES

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- ‘28 But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. 29 Or how can one enter a strong man’s house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. 30 Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.’ Matt 12:28-20

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS PRESENT IN THE PARABLES

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- Matt 12:28-20
- Matt 13
  - vv 1-23 the sower
  - vv 14-30, 36-43 wheat and weeds: 'How can the kingdom of God have come if there is evil in the world?'
  - vv 31-32, 33 mustard seed and yeast: 'How can the kingdom of God be present if the results are so tiny?'
  - vv 44, 45-46 treasure in field, pearl

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS PRESENT IN THE PARABLES

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- Matt 12:28-20
- Matt 13
- Luke 14:15-24/Matt 22:1-14 the banquet
  - invitation to all
    - Luke 7:41-43 master forgiving debt
    - Luke 15 lost sheep, lost coin, lost sons
    - Matt 18:23-25 merciful king, unmerciful servant
    - Matt 10:10-16 generous master
  - kingdom people called to live in kingdom ways

# THE KINGDOM OF GOD AS FUTURE IN THE PARABLES

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- Parables of judgement
  - e.g. ten bridesmaids Matt 25:1-3
- Parables of growth, esp. including dividing a harvest in future, e.g.
  - wheat and weeds Matt 13:24-30
  - mustard seed, and yeast Matt 13:31-33
  - talents Matt 25:14-30 cf. pounds Luke 19:11-27
  - dishonest manager Luke 16:1-13

# RESPONSE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD IN THE PARABLES

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- Discipleship
  - use of wealth, e.g.
    - rich fool Luke 12:16-21
    - rich man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31
  - prayer, e.g.
    - friend at midnight Luke 11:5-8
    - unjust judge and persistent widow Luke 18:1-8